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# GOSPEL STUDIES.

BY

ALEXANDER VINET, D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND; AUTHOR OF  
"VITAL CHRISTIANITY," ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY

ROBERT BAIRD, D. D.

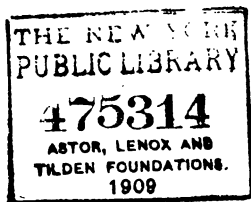
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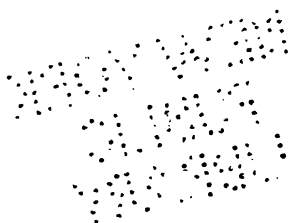
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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE author of the beautiful Discourses which follow, under the title of "Gospel Studies," was the late Dr. Alexander Vinet, of Switzerland—probably the most profound metaphysician that the Continent, if not Europe entire, has produced in our times. But he was not only a distinguished philosopher; he was an able divine and an admirable preacher.

Dr. Vinet was born on the 19th of June, 1797, in the city of Lausanne, the capital of the Canton Vaud, one of the finest portions of the country of William Tell. In this picturesque old city, standing on the high bank of Lake Lemane, he passed his youth, prosecuting his studies in the "Academy" (or University as we should term it), founded by Viret, the Reformer of Lausanne, and of the region around, at that period (the 16th century) a part of the Canton Berne. From an early age he displayed a great taste for literature and for moral science, in both of which he was destined to excel.

At the age of twenty, two years before the legal termination of his studies in that Academy, he was appointed Professor of the French language and literature in the University of Basle, the capital of the Canton of the same name, an old German city on the banks of the Rhine. This city

was the scene of the labors of the good Pecolampadius, one of the most distinguished of the Reformers, of glorious memory, as well as the residence during many years of his life, of Erasmus, and the place of his death.

Dr. Vinet resided about twenty years at Basle, officiating as Pastor of the Protestant French Church in that city, whilst performing his duties as a Professor in the University. During this period he wrote several of his excellent works.

In 1837, Dr. Vinet was invited by the government of his native Canton to the Professorship of Theology in the Academy of Lausanne. In that city he spent the last ten years of his life. In the summer of 1847, he was called by the Master to his everlasting rest and reward, and left behind him a great circle of admiring and weeping friends, to deplore the loss which the Church and the world have sustained by his removal.

In 1830, Dr. Vinet published his first volume on religious subjects, consisting of two Discourses, one entitled, *The Intolerance of the Gospel*; the other, *The Tolerance of the Gospel*—a work which attracted no little attention. In 1836 he published at Paris his *Discourses on some Religious Subjects*, which was followed not long afterwards by another volume entitled, *New Discourses*, on the same topic.\*

After these volumes succeeded, at intervals, some six or eight others on Religious, Philosophical, and Literary subjects, all of them possessing great merit, and some of them displaying the very highest and noblest attributes and qualities of the human mind. Besides these works, issued in a more permanent form, Dr. Vinet wrote much for the *Semeur*, a literary gazette published once a week in Paris,

\* It is from these two volumes that the Rev. Dr. Turnbull has selected the Discourses which he has so well translated, and given to the world under the title of *Vital Christianity, by Vinet*.

since 1832 or '33, as well as for other periodicals of that day. All these articles bear the impress of his powerful intellect and his exquisite taste.

But the great work of Dr. Vinet was one of the last which came from his pen, and is entitled, *The Manifestation of Religious Convictions and the Separation of the Church from the State*\*—a work which has been translated into German, and has produced a great sensation in France, Germany, and Switzerland. Nor has its influence been confined to those countries. It is manifest that the mind of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel has been greatly enlightened by the profound argument which Dr. Vinet has developed in that admirable volume.

In his last years, Dr. Vinet was greatly occupied with the ecclesiastical affairs of the Canton Vaud ; and one of the last things which he wrote was the Confession and Economy of the FREE CHURCH of that Canton, organized but a few months before his death. This was a work which he had greatly at heart. Alas ! he was called away from that church just at the moment when it was commencing its existence, and when, to the view of men, his presence and his aid were so much needed to sustain and guide in the heavy persecutions which have since befallen it, and of which we cannot yet discern the termination.

Respecting the volume which these brief remarks are designed to introduce to the American reader, it may not be amiss to say a word or two. It will be found to correspond admirably with the beautiful title which it bears :—GOSPEL STUDIES. It is at once simple and profound. The mode of treating every topic is as different as it is possible to conceive,

\* Sur La Manifestation Des Convictions Religieuses et sur La Séparation de L'Eglise de L'État.



from that which an Anglo-American author would pursue. It is emphatically *French*. On this account the work is the more valuable. The reader will be struck with its fresh and interesting character at every step. Every thought is presented under a garb novel and striking. There is here nothing trite, nothing hackneyed, nothing formal. Every thing is new. The old theological terms are dispensed with as much as possible. Dr. Vinet was, like John Foster, a philosopher rather than a theologian. He presents the great truths of the Gospel in a philosophical manner, and yet in a manner beautiful for its simplicity. No one can read a page of this book without being made to *think*. Every truth is revolved and reviewed, till it gains a firm lodgment in the mind of the reader, and with God's blessing, it cannot fail to do good to all, but especially to those who are likely to be repelled by the phraseology which they would certainly find in a work written by an American or an English author. To His blessing, this, the first edition of it in our country, is devoutly commended.

R. B.

*New-York, May, 1849.*

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## GOSPEL STUDIES.

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### LOOKING.

"And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."—NUM. xxi. 9.

THOUGH we walk by faith and not by sight, it is to a look that our salvation is attached, and the faith which saves us is nothing but this look. Our condition in the wilderness of life resembles that of the Israelites in their wilderness. Those were cured who looked to the serpent of brass, and we rise to newness of life by lifting our eyes to the cross. This look, brethren, will form the subject of my present address.

God, who has given a subject to narrate, has given power to look. This is the beginning, the basis of *His* work, while *ours*, (which, in one sense, is also *His*, because every thing, without exception, comes from Him,) is to look; at least this is the beginning and basis of our work. All comes to this, and is reared on this; on this all depends. We would reply to those who, by the term *faith*, mean something less than this, or imagine something more. We would make them understand that men believe not if they look not, and that in order to have life it is sufficient to look. May our discourse prove, by *the grace of God*, as simple as the subject!

To say, in absolute terms, that we are saved by a look, would be to say that we save ourselves. Now, it is very true that salvation is accomplished in us, and that even, according to an emphatic expression of St. Paul, we accomplish it; but all its roots are without us. First, there is an act which belongs throughout to God, an act in which we are as nothing: I mean pardon. God has pardoned; God has offered the hand of reconciliation, and Jesus Christ, who is at once God and man, has come forward to be surety for God in regard to men, and hostage for man in regard to God. Jesus Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant, in which the heart of God is fully manifested; a covenant bearing for its seal and motto words never heard before, *God is Love*. This is pardon. It is not, however, salvation; which, beginning out of man, is performed in him. Man is saved by Jesus Christ, inasmuch as Jesus Christ sanctifies him. Man lost in the *first*, would not be saved in the *second* Adam, did not the *second* become a quickening Spirit, and cause him to rise to newness of life. This resurrection properly constitutes salvation, and is, moreover, the work of God, who is the finisher of salvation, as he is the founder of it. Man does not resuscitate himself. It is true the work is not performed without him. By the good pleasure of God he bears an active and important part in it, but a part which is very simple. All he does is to believe and look, to look and believe. Whoso sees the Son and believes in him hath eternal life. There must be something to look at, and this depends solely on God; but it is necessary to look, and this is the part of man. The object exhibited to our view is of such a nature and of such virtue that when looked at it gives us life, just as life was given to those who looked at the serpent of Moses.

The quickening power of the eye of faith forms the subject of our remarks.

We might first speak generally of the virtue or power of sight. We might say that it is a shorter and livelier method

of acquiring knowledge : that knowledge, however, is not the only result ; because affection is promptly and almost irresistibly excited, when the object is worthy of inspiring it : that, in short, the eye is the first, the readiest, the surest of teachers. It exhorts, rebukes, amends, reforms, and gradually begets a likeness to the object which is contemplated. Hence example, when it is uniform and well sustained, supersedes oral teaching, and constitutes of itself a complete education. The man who is permitted to see only what is true, and who sees it distinctly, is insensibly won over to the truth. Of this we are assured by God himself, who has promised in his Word that in heaven we "shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

On this principle God has founded his work of mercy and restoration. It was a look that ruined us (Gen. iii. 6), and it is by a look that he has been pleased to save us.

What, then, should be the object of this look by which the divine life, extinguished by sin, is to be rekindled in our bosoms ? Is it on man himself that man should fix his eye ? Unquestionably he must look at himself, because he cannot otherwise know himself ; and when self-knowledge is wanting, all other knowledge is impossible or useless. But what can a look, of which man himself is the object, avail for his restoration ? If he sees himself as he is not, he is puffed up ; if he sees himself as he is, he desponds. Now, the divine life, which is unison of heart with God, cannot be produced in the bosom of pride, nor exist in the absence of hope. Hence, if man is to find life, he must find it elsewhere than in a deceitful or sterile survey of himself.

It would seem then (does it not ?) that man should fix his eye on God. What is better fitted, or rather what else is fitted to instruct, reprove, heal, and raise up the unhappy son of Adam ? But God is veiled. From the thick clouds which surround him, only thunders and lightnings burst

forth. Above the sphere of man, nothing meets our eager, anxious gaze, but impenetrable darkness, terrific flames.

We must not deceive ourselves. The mild, yet majestic image, the very idea of Him whom modern ages have learned to style a God of goodness, is not natural to the imagination and the intellect of man. The Gospel introduced it into our minds. A God of goodness is a God revealed.

The fact, however painful, must be avowed. It is not the view of God that will engender a new life, since this view is either forbidden to our eyes, or obliges us to shut them in dismay. How, then, could man be saved by it?

Accordingly, it is neither directly towards man nor towards God that the Gospel invites us to look. It is indeed towards God and towards man, but towards both as represented by Jesus Christ and united in Jesus Christ.

In Jesus Christ, in fact, we behold God in the fulness of his attributes and the accomplishment of his will; and (wonderful to tell!) we behold man at once as he is, and as he ought to be. God, I have said, in the fulness of his attributes; for it has pleased him that all the fulness of the Godhead should dwell in Christ, in whom he has for the first time revealed to the world the immensity of his love. Man, I have said, as he is and as he ought to be; the former intimated by the indignities and sufferings of Christ, which furnish the measure of man's guilt, and the latter realized in the holiness of Christ, who, perfectly fulfilling the law in thought, word, and deed, has far surpassed the innocence of the first Adam. Such, brethren, is the object which the Gospel presents to our view. But there is in this object a central point, a finishing stroke, which exhibits the whole, gives it all its power over our souls, and causes the look which we fix upon it to become the principle and nourishment of a new moral life. This central point, this finishing stroke, is the crucifixion. Accompanying you straight to this bloody centre, we understand the *feeling* of St. Paul, when he declared his determination to

know nothing among his proselytes but "Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Jesus Christ may be compared to a mountain, from the top of which the eye takes in the whole extent of the country, and reaches to its utmost limits. At the very first platform which you reach in your ascent, your eye carries you farther than it did at the base, and every step enlarges your horizon; but if you would take in the whole view, you must climb to the very summit. There you see all that you saw from a lower level, and you see, moreover, what could not be seen any where else. Now, the highest summit of Jesus Christ, if we may so speak, is Jesus Christ crucified. From the highest we see all that can be seen and know all that can be known. The view which we enjoy at this high elevation combines and comprehends the whole. If we would know what man is, where can we learn better than from the unutterable horror of that death in which extremity of pain is aggravated by extremity of disgrace, while ingratitude and treachery wring out their bitter draught into the cup of sorrows; that death to which both honor and commiseration are denied, and from which God himself turns away and withdraws his consolations? If it is because of man that a being perfectly righteous suffers all these things, say what is man; how desperate must be his disease, and yet how great his dignity and primeval excellence! Even in the view of God what must that being be, for whom God himself has consented to die? Behold then and say, Here is man!

If we would know man, not as he is, but as he should and as he may be, where shall we learn better than from that cross on which a righteous man, (a man, be it remembered,) dies for unrighteous men; and on which a human soul displays all that man has ever been able to conceive, but never able to realize, self-denial, magnanimity, meekness, moral power—than from that death which contrasted with the most *generous deaths* of which history makes mention,



leaves them far behind, even those of them which it has itself inspired? Behold again, and say, Here is man!

Is this enough? No, it is God himself that you must see and know. The sight of the cross has humbled you. This I admit. It has elevated your moral sense, and given you a perception of your primitive destination and reasonable service. This too I admit. But these preparatory stones would for ever have been stones on which nothing could be built, had God continued to be an unknown God, a God to whom you could not without hesitation have offered your respect and love, and in seeking whom your respect and love must have perished by the way.

But in the death of his Son He unveils a countenance full of mercy and of majesty; He exhibits himself as a living God, into whose hand it is no longer terrible but delightful to fall; in one word, as a Father who was always a Father, but now at length openly declares it. In like manner He was always holy; but did you ever know, had you ever formed even an idea of the holiness of God, up to the moment when God, in order to secure men from sin, consented that his spotless Son should suffer such contradiction and indignity from sinful men! Till then did you understand that sin and suffering go hand in hand, cannot be separated, and are, so to speak, one and the same? A look, a single look, tells you all this, teaches you all that you ought to learn, rids you of all fears but the fear of doing evil, gives you at once a master and a father, assures you of a friend and intercessor in heaven, dissipates all the mists of doubt, unriddles the enigma of life, and enables you to cast the anchor of a joyful hope beyond the grave.

This internal revolution penetrates to the inmost recesses of the soul, removing that load of remorse and despair, the weight of which was oppressive and almost stifling. The Lord has said, "I will shake the heavens and the earth, and *the sea and the dry land*; and I will shake all nations, and

the desire of all nations shall come." Hag. ii. 6, 7. Yes, he will shake the heavens that he may thereby shake the earth, that is to say the heart of man. Surely that which subverts the heavens may well make a thorough subversion in the heart of man ; and when God has recourse to violence in order to conquer back his creature, we may rest assured that the creature undergoes some violent and decisive change, is brought to a dreadful yet blessed crisis which issues in recovery and life. Either say that the restoration of man is beyond the power, and that the very attempt to restore him is beyond the love of God ; or say that this was the heroic, the infallible mean, in other words, that the redemption of man was the sure and probably the only method of saving him : if it is true, as we again repeat, that he cannot be saved without being regenerated. And now in order that this may be accomplished, what has he to do but look ? As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up. Every one which *seeth* the Son, hath everlasting life. John vi. 40.

Such is according to Scripture, and such we may add is according to the testimony of experience, the plan of God for your salvation. Your salvation is not accomplished out of you, or without you ; you cannot be saved if you are not changed, and you cannot be changed, in other words, regenerated, without being thereby saved. Your salvation is not your work. Begun in God, it is finished in you ; and it is in regard to these two phases, these two grand acts of mercy, that the Gospel calls Jesus Christ the author and finisher of salvation, a salvation the completion of which consists entirely in the moral effects which we have just been tracing.

If you remind us that another element must be taken into account, viz., inward grace, that power of the Spirit which acts upon the spirit of man, and is the active principle of his regeneration, just as regeneration is itself the condition, not to say the *very essence* of salvation ; we reply that

this is also our opinion, but that **grace, a mysterious operation**, the internal processes of which escape our view, accomplishes its end only by instilling into our hearts that joy, gratitude, hope, and love, which together constitute the character of the new creature, and which though supernatural in one sense, are natural in another, being in exact correspondence with the facts which the cross reveals. How necessary soever grace may be, it is nevertheless true that it does not act alone, that it does not act without the co-operation of those facts; and that it is equally true to say, either that these facts regenerate us through grace, or that grace regenerates us through them. Whatever may be said of grace, it is certain that he only who sees the Son has everlasting life, and that this sight to which we are led and determined by Divine grace, is sufficient for salvation. Inasmuch then as grace makes us capable of looking, we are saved by a look directed to the cross.

Here we encounter two objections, bearing upon the two principal terms of the proposition which has just been announced. Is the cross the only object to which we are to look? Is this look a simple act of looking, and nothing more?

We mean not to say, brethren, that the only thing of importance in Jesus Christ is his cross, and that we are to look to it alone, to the neglect of every thing else. Christ Jesus did not come into the world exclusively for the purpose of dying. He taught, he performed miracles, he lived in the different relations of human life; and the Gospel, by not confining its narrative to his death, invites us to study and venerate Jesus Christ in all his capacities. We know, and are careful not to forget how it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell, and that he has been made of God unto us, not redemption merely, but wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification. Still Jesus Christ could not have become our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, except by becoming our redemption. And what is the

connection between these and redemption? In what way does redemption produce the others, or make them possible, and become itself an effectual and complete redemption? The whole process, brethren, consists in fixing our eye upon redemption, upon the Redeemer, upon Christ crucified.

Suppose you retain every thing of Jesus Christ but his sacrifice: leave him all his purity, all his wisdom, and, in so far as it is possible while excluding his sacrifice, leave him all his love; I maintain that even in regard to his other properties it cannot be said when the cross is suppressed that all fulness dwells in him, or that he has been made unto us either wisdom or righteousness, or sanctification; and, on the contrary, that he will leave you essentially, and to all intents, just as you are. I maintain that you cannot avail yourself of these qualities; that you cannot discern and recognize them, except by the light of the cross, seeing that it is this light alone which enables us to read the sacred characters in which all these truths are imprinted in the Gospel. I go farther, and maintain that this wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, indispensable conditions of eternal life, and sacred earnest of our inheritance, are in germ and principle included in faith in the work of redemption, or, if you will, in the look with which we fasten upon this work. I maintain that they come forth from it spontaneously, just as the blade sends forth the stalk, and the stalk the grain; that in the soul whose look is fixed upon the cross there exists a beginning of wisdom, a beginning of righteousness, a beginning of sanctification; and that in proportion as the believer's work is so fixed, the spiritual life, under the three forms which the above terms imply, grows and is silently developed in his breast. I hold that where this look is not, there is no Christian; and that where it is, it by itself alone constitutes the Christian.

He who looks not to this fact of Christ crucified, he who neglects *it in order to devote himself* (so at least he imagines)

to what is primary and essential, makes it only the more certain that he will miss the end at which he aims. He is bent on the application! The application of what, pray? His object is life, but where is life, except in believing in Him whom the Father has sent? He says, perhaps, that he is unwilling to dwell on a true but idle speculation. He will quit mystery to secure perspicuity, doctrine to cultivate morality. Is it his wish then to plant a tree without roots, or is he contented that his vine though watered by the purest blood of the universe, shall notwithstanding bring forth only wild grapes? What! Is the incarnation an unimportant fact? If this fact be suppressed, and it is suppressed if we do not contemplate it, shall we have the same morality, evangelical morality, the same spirit, the spirit of holiness? On the contrary, it is evident that in the Gospel we shall only have a new, and that scarcely an improved edition of the ancient systems of morality. I say scarcely improved, for if it should appear in some respects more correct, in others it would seem obscure, extravagant, and impracticable. It would be like a book filled with mysterious allusions, for the interpretation of which it would be necessary to have a key, and there is no other key but the cross. What then could be done but throw aside all that is obscure, all that is spiritual, all that appears eccentric, when no centre is seen; to discard the commands enjoining us to bear the cross, to take the kingdom by violence, to hate father and mother, to die to oneself, to pray without ceasing? In a word, what could we do but sink down to the level of natural morality, while uttering sacred names, appealing to venerable recollections, and celebrating without understanding, as without true heartfelt assent, and consequently without true faith, rites in which, as our morality and our lives would abundantly show, we were unable to perceive any meaning?

*It will not do to say, This truth, like many others, is in*

the Gospel. It will not even do to say, This truth is the most important in the Gospel. What you must say is, This truth is the Gospel itself, and all the rest of the Gospel is only the form, the transcript, or the application of it. This truth is present in every part of the Gospel, just as the blood is present in every part of the human body. To him who comprehends this capital truth, every thing recalls, every thing reproduces it. Even where another person would never suspect its presence, he sees and feels it. On whatever side he looks, into whatever details he enters, to whatever application he directs his view, he meets and recognizes the cross. How indeed should he miss it in any part of a book, or of a religion, of which the cross is the proper subject?

Jesus Christ came not merely to teach morality at the risk of his life, at the price of his blood. He came not merely to preach practical truths, which we never would have forgotten if we had not forgotten God, and which we shall easily recover as soon as we return to God. These truths, the truths I mean which characterize the morality of the Gospel, are of such a nature that Jesus Christ could not publish them to any useful purpose unless he counterbalanced their fearful requirements by revealing God as a God of mercy, and exhibiting a pledge of his willingness to pardon in the humiliation and sacrifice of his beloved Son. It is not to the publication of these moral maxims, nor to the attention which we can give to them while isolating them from the person and work of their great Promulgator that our salvation is directly attached. It is attached, above all, to the incarnation of Christ, to his humiliation, and sufferings, and death, and, consequently, to the believing look which places all these wonders within our reach, and makes them, so to speak, our own.

True, when once we have accepted the grand dispensation of the divine clemency, it is proper and it is useful to

study those instructions of Christ and his apostles, of which it is certain that we henceforth possess the key ; but at all times it is necessary in reading these maxims to draw near to a dying Saviour as to a torch, which enables us, the nearer we approach it, to read the more easily. It is under the active influence, in the presence, and as it were within the immediate sphere of this great truth ; it is when surrounded by its light, and warmed by its heat, that every thing additional which the Gospel contains should be studied. Is it too much to say that this morality ought to be transcribed on the very cross of Christ, so that we may be able to read the one without withdrawing our eyes from the other ? But has it not been written there already ? Is not Calvary a new Sinai ? Is not the cross the new table of a new Moses ? And without turning our view from that tree, at once cursed and holy ; without taking our eye for a single instant off Him whom our sins have nailed to it, may we not read, as in a new decalogue, an abridgment and summary of that new law, and the laws and constitution of that new people whom he came to gather out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ?

No, the cross is not only the torch by whose light we read instruction which has been deposited elsewhere ; it is itself full of instruction. Let us attend for a moment to the lessons of the cross.

The Saviour had not waited till his crucifixion to teach great truths. What sublime lessons had not he, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3), delivered in the course of his ministry ! What lessons on the holiness and inviolability of the divine law, which aims at nothing short of perfection, and of which not one iota can fail ! What lessons on the misery of man in all those solemn passages which declare, that unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, and that whoso believeth not the Son of God, in other words, does not cast him-

self on the free mercy of the Father, is by anticipation, is already irremediably condemned, the wrath of the Father abiding on him ! What a demonstration of this divine mercy is the mere spectacle of the Mediator suspended on the accursed tree, offering a sacrifice which, to avail those who are at once the objects and the authors of it, asks only to be believed and accepted ! What would all these lessons be without the corresponding facts ? Instead of saying that the facts confirm the words, we should rather say that the words confirm the facts. The instruction is in the facts, and there only could it be. Who would ever have believed in the holiness of the law but for this bloody satisfaction ? or in the deep-seated disease of human nature, but for the violence of the remedy ? or in the greatness of the mercy, but for such a sacrifice ? Who, but for this, would ever have understood our strict accountability to God ?—how completely we must die to ourselves that we may truly live ?—how strongly we are bound to all the creatures of God ?—how far we ought to carry our devotedness and charity towards all men ? In regard to all these subjects, how are we to be enlightened ? By a ray of the sun, or by a clap of thunder ? By both at once, for the cross is both. The flash of light, vivid and terrific though it be, comes only from the cross. With reference to all these truths, what man required was facts. He needed not to hear but to see ; and, until he had seen, there is nothing that might have been said to him which he would have been able to understand. Jesus the victim behoved to accredit Jesus the teacher : the priest behoved to introduce the prophet.

In regard to lessons from example, the life of Jesus was full of them ; and here I may take occasion to observe, that his whole life was a passion, a prolonged death, of which the cross was only the culminating point and consecration. But if the life of Jesus, supposing it to have come to a natural and peaceful end, must have appeared to us the fairest of



lives, how noble is the crown which it receives from its concluding scenes! We formerly observed how greatly a constant view of goodness and justice, when accompanied with the arguments of reason and other influential motives, may contribute to render us gradually good and just. Now all the virtues of the holy life of Jesus are here carried to their utmost height, and collected as it were in a single point under a single view. Apart from all the circumstances which render it sublime, and which brightly manifest a God in a dying man, this death, formally announced, foreseen with all its bitter ingredients, all its insults and all its sorrows, yet calmly awaited and voluntarily endured, is the last and loftiest expression of obedience, fidelity, devotedness. Human nature, which always possessed within itself the ideal of spotless love, still waited for the realization of it, but no longer waits since the day of the crucifixion. For, as an apostle has said, Herein is love, that Christ laid down his life for us. How will this generous death appear if, instead of considering it as a kind of naked abstraction, we invest it with all the circumstances which distinguish it from all other deaths; if we contemplate it in those inimitable features of majesty and tenderness, of compassion and authority, which convert this cross into a throne, a judgment-seat, an asylum, and constrain us, after eighteen centuries, to exclaim with the centurion, "Surely this was the Son of God!" Matt. xxvii. 54.

Let us leave to our divine Mediator all that he cannot communicate to us. His divinity belongs only to himself; but his humanity is ours! The virtues which he displays upon the cross are in their perfection human virtues. They are for our own use, and are proposed for our imitation. These examples form part of our inheritance. But his whole life bore the same character as his death. From the first day when the Gospel narrative brings him before us he was, without intermission, faithful, obedient, patient, charita-

ble. But this was not enough. Even by way of example this death, with all its peculiar features, was indispensable. Without it the virtues of Jesus might have been supposed to have limits. His example, though perfect in itself, remained imperfect, if I may so express it, from want of a perfect sphere of action. We knew not all the virtues which the human soul is called to display, but we know them now. Jesus Christ informs us. Without the cross, he could not have done so.

Was it necessary, in fine, that in addition to instruction and example, we should receive something else from Jesus Christ; or were instruction and example sufficient? You, brethren, know well that they would have served only to render our condemnation more inevitable, if, while fully demonstrating the truth, they had not united us to the truth. How could we have expected this union, this change of heart and nature, from the mere influence of instruction and example? It would be to form a very feeble, a very false idea of the conversion of the heart, to imagine that the finest examples, and the gravest lessons, are able to convert any individual whatever. If conversion is at once a death and a birth, the death of the old man, and the birth of a new man; if conversion is in principle and in fact a victory over the world, over the pleasures, the opinions, the prejudices, the wisdom, the virtues of the world, over what is honorable and specious, as much as over what is ignoble and is disavowed by the world; if conversion, rendering us blind to things visible, and giving us eyes to discern things invisible, makes us use the world as not using it, and be of the world as not being of it; in one word, makes us strangers on the earth by convincing us that so we are by origin and destiny: if conversion is all this, and nothing less, it supposes so complete and serious an abjuration of all the principles of the natural man, an abjuration not merely of his vices, but of his virtues; it supposes such a general, unreserved, and unquali-

fied sacrifice, without any expected recompense from God excepting God himself, that it would be absolutely irrational to attribute to any instruction and example, of what kind soever, the power of producing a revolution so thorough and fundamental. Now we cannot doubt that this revolution has taken place in several individuals, and even in a large number, if to those who are personally known to us, we add those whose character and conduct has been attested to us by irrefragable testimony. Society, moreover, has, after its own manner, undergone this revolution. Not to enter into further detail, the most civilized nations have assumed the arms of Christ, sealed with them their treaties and their laws, and stamped them on their customs and manners. In good earnest, do you think that he in honor of whom, and at whose call, the world changed its laws, its manners, and spirit, and has for eighteen centuries, notwithstanding the obstacles raised up by enemies and corruptors, followed the same invariable direction—do you think that he was in the eyes of the world only the first of sages, and the first of virtuous men? No! he was the Crucified! No! he was the Redeemer! Before no less than He, could eighteen centuries come in succession and offer homage. To depict on their standards, to erect upon their palaces, to engrave upon their public seals, the image of an infamous execution, it was necessary that he who endured it should in their eyes be something more than the devoted friend of man. He behoved to be a Redeemer. More than a martyr, he behoved to be a God. Efface from the Gospel, I say not the cross, but the evangelical signification of the cross, and you render those eighteen centuries absurd or impossible. But you will not do so. For who among you, even though not comprehending it, even though not consenting to it, is not constrained to admit that nothing could have determined so many successive generations to make a cross the symbol of their faith and their civilization, but the fact that they saw in

it a Redeemer, and in the Redeemer, considered as such, all religious truth ; the last communication from God in regard to himself, and in regard to man ? We should not fear to say it. It is long since but for this the Gospel would not have been spoken of in the world, if indeed it would have ever been. It is not so much the Gospel that has preserved the doctrine of the cross, as the doctrine of the cross that has preserved the Gospel.

As from the hand of God alone, the earth with all the heavenly bodies could receive the primary inexhaustible impulse which has caused it for thousands of years to circle round the sun in an immense orbit, with a velocity which, always uniform, measures out our years and ages ; so it was by Christ, but by Christ dying, that man and man's nature could be launched into those new orbits which make them traverse beyond the sphere of the world, a sphere which is spiritual and divine. All the might, all the reality of Christianity in each Christian, is there and only there. Even the lessons and example of Jesus Christ, in order to become living and fruitful, require a ray darted from the cross. Till then their bearing is questionable, their meaning is uncertain ; they signify only what we make them signify. Their virtues become fixed, precise, and absolute, only from the moment that this ray, or shall I say this luminous look of Christ crucified, makes all his lineaments and features to stand forth distinctly in relief. Above all, it is then only that the soul proceeds resolutely to observe those lessons, and follow those examples. When disembarking on the shore of the land she is to conquer, then only, if we may so speak, does she set fire to her ships, and so cut off all means of retreat towards the country which she has left. Determination, strength, and life, are only there ; because from the cross only, and not from mere lessons or examples spring up perennial streams of joy and love. I say joy and love, which, like two currents of air from different points of the horizon,

unite and form a single gale which wafts the soul to God. But if it is not love without joy, neither is it joy without love. For if joy is the condition of activity, love is the condition of divine activity and life. No doubt that which draws and fixes our look on Jesus crucified is the joy of finding our salvation in him; but that which truly makes us find our salvation in him, that which in this view accomplishes our salvation, is not joy, but the love which meets our view in the presence, or more properly at the feet, of divine love.

We do not come here, brethren, to preach up the contemplative life; we have better work to do. But we are entitled, by the example of Jesus Christ, to invite you to contemplation. The joy of salvation is necessary, I admit, to set enchained love at liberty in our hearts; but the chain once broken, what have we to do but leave it to take its flight, and quench its thirst, and incessantly obtain new vigor, by contemplating the most perfect form of love? Ah! would that man could but for once forget himself; that he could for some moments, at least, find all his happiness in admiration, enthusiasm, and tenderness! Would that he could say to himself not only, Jesus saved me, Jesus loved me, but Jesus is salvation, Jesus is love! Would that he could sometimes, in this love which is salvation, forget that it is salvation, and in love see nothing but love!

After all, what is it that elevates the human soul to the utmost height which it is permitted to attain? What is it that makes it, according to an Apostle, "partaker of the divine nature?" 2 Pet. i. 4. It is not joy; it is love. Joy reanimates and elevates it, joy conducts it towards love. I say more, (for it were heresy not to take our weakness into account,) joy comes to the assistance of love in hours of fainting, which would otherwise prove mortal. It is for this, and nothing but this, that joy is good. Love is the end, the final course of joy: love alone is life. You may judge by analogy. What are the happy moments in a man's life? The

peace & men are the center of the world  
runs invisible hand air like love looks  
look in every thing  
LOOKING.

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sublime moments! those I mean in which the soul eagerly unites itself by admiration or sympathy to what is good, great, and generous. It feels that these moments if prolonged, that admiration if freed from all mixture, would have constituted supreme felicity. The soul is completely happy only when in union with its principle it forgets itself; when merged in its principle it becomes, in regard to the God whom it loves, only a mirror, an altar, or an echo. Too often the gravest speculations, the speculations worthiest of a Christian, tend to occupy us too much with ourselves. Those meditations, those discussions on free will, on assurance, on the connection between faith and works, and even on the properties of faith, mix us too much up with our subject, and give too strong a hold to that vivacious self-interest which catches at and clings to every thing. The look directed towards Jesus, and this look only, has an opposite tendency. In proportion as it is prolonged, it inspires our soul with a holy enthusiasm, a holy love. It makes those dispositions habitual or dominant in our heart. It becomes at once the light and the heat of our life. It facilitates, simplifies, illumines all. It does better than refute doubts, it absorbs them. In its brightness all their equivocal or false glimmerings are quenched. It bids away frivolous questions, discards subtleties, creates a triumphant evidence, and transports us by anticipation into the light of heaven, putting under our feet all the clouds which hung over our heads.

That which creates and sustains this life, at the same time regulates it. The feeling of strength ever fading and imperfect, easily engenders pride and rashness; but all the treasures of wisdom are comprehended in this light of the cross. It does not give us confidence in God, without giving us distrust in ourselves. It makes even this distrust one of the parts of our faith, one of the elements of our strength, one of the pledges of our security. It, in a word, inspires our humility with courage, by concentrating our looks and

our hope upon the same object, and incessantly repeating to us, by the mouth of the prophet, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." Is. li. 1.

It is impossible, brethren, to say or even attend to all that might be said, nor is it necessary. We have said enough, or rather you, by our mouth, have said enough to yourselves in order to feel that Christ crucified is the principal object of the Christian; that his look, when directed to this object, never fails to find in it all the other objects of Christian truth; that we cannot contemplate these objects in themselves to any good purpose except by holding them very near to the cross, which can enable us to see them distinctly, and judge them correctly: in a word, that there are other objects in religion, but that it is only in it and by it, that we can have a real, accurate, profound, living, efficacious knowledge of them. Jesus Christ, we repeat, has been made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, only by having been made unto us redemption.

Accordingly, brethren, it was towards this last fact, towards salvation by grace, towards reconciliation by Jesus Christ, towards the mediation accomplished by the God-Man, that the Apostles of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ himself, directed and fixed the look of the rising Church; knowing well that the conscience of the Christian, when placed in the centre of truth, would easily reach the circumference; whereas it could not, if placed at the circumference, see the centre. What do I say? It could not even place itself at the circumference, because this is seen only from the centre. The Jews placed themselves, in idea, on this circumference, or within this circle, though truly impenetrable and invisible from without, when they said to Jesus Christ, "What shall we do to work the works of God?" and Jesus Christ carried them at once to this forgotten centre when he answered, "The work of God is to believe in him whom God hath

sent." When Jesus Christ, moreover, was pleased to give an epitome of his doctrine, and render it visible in a rite which should express it, and preserve it in all its entirety ; a rite where no one could mistake it, and where even in the absence of instruction and oral teaching, it would be found pure and intact—what did he do, brethren ? He instituted the Supper, which clearly represents the body of Christ delivered for our sins, and his blood shed for our iniquities, and which cannot represent any thing but this, so that to the end of ages, wherever it will be celebrated, it will recall this event, it will awaken this idea in all minds, the Supper being nothing but the Gospel abridged, and the Gospel reduced by an image to its fundamental idea. In the same way true reformers have at all times carried back the view of the Church towards this centre ; and every Church, by looking back towards it, has regained the life which it could not find, nor even seek elsewhere.

Are the Apostles desirous to maintain life in their flocks ? They, like Moses in the desert, lift up the serpent of brass, and exclaim, "Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." Heb. xii. 2. Do they see life, zeal, and love, languishing in their churches, they pronounce the watchword of Christianity, they appeal to the memory of Christ crucified, they exhibit him in accents of painful astonishment and censure to their misguided followers : "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you ?" Gal. iii. 1. It is useless to multiply examples, and furnish superfluous proof from the past. The present also demands our attention.

In the present day, what is it to preach the Gospel but just to hold forth Christ crucified to the view of men ? Where do you see the Christian life bud forth and expand itself, save there only where the *beginning and end of preaching* is, "*Look*



on him whom ye have pierced." What do I say? Does not the preaching which forms new converts consist entirely of these words, just as the preaching which carries them on and matures them comes incessantly to the same point, making it the source of all its instruction, the aim of all its lessons?

Yes! this single word, this single object, **THE CROSS**, may suffice to make Christians, and without it nothing suffices.

The proper object of the commission of the missionary, as well as that of the pastor, is to announce Jesus Christ. This is his first lesson, and it is the strength, the grace, the mercy, the key of all the rest. Wonderful beyond expression! A look, a simple look, (I mean not an argument, a study, a toil,) a simple look converts the world; and the essential task of the apostle is to dispose sinners, those sufferers in another wilderness, to lift their drooping heads from the ground, and turn their eyes in a particular direction. What direction? That of a cross, a hideous object covered with blood, an instrument of torture and symbol of ignominy; and which, if the sufferer had not made the instrument glorious, would produce in our imagination the shuddering impression of a gibbet or a scaffold! Well! the view of this object realizes the salvation of the world, the whole price of which has been paid by the divine goodness; and all that we have to do, not as the condition of our unconditional salvation, but as a means of appropriating it, is to look at it; not that the look is all, but that it is a prolific, creative look, which contains and produces all.

If the fastidious sentimentalists of the world, whose imagination has antipathies which are stronger than the wants and instincts of their soul; if the admirers of human perfection, spurning the idea of a bloody satisfaction, and a salvation which their pride will not allow them to accept *gratis*, turn away from the spectacle at once fearful and humiliating

we set before them; if that which is gloomy in it from them that which is sublime—we have a hope on the experience of ages, that there will be found less proud (perhaps after the hammer of God shall broken their pride to pieces); spirits which will not obly turn away their eyes, but will consent to behold and n him whom they have pierced. And whilst, O hea-  
 Brother! whilst many are astonished because of thee, se thy visage is more marred than that of any man, they exclaim, “What! is this the person who is pro- to our faith as its object, its author and finisher? There beauty nor comeliness in him, nothing to make him to ired!” there will be found in all ages, in all countries, all conditions, O crucified Redeemer! admirers of thy y, which will never have seemed to them so great and ine as under the sweat of Gethsemane, the spittings of ætorium, and the blood as it trickled from the crown of down thy sacred brow! In their eyes thou art fairer any of the sons of men; and it is under thy cross, in ew of thy ignominy, that with hearts deeply moved ing:

Beneath that vail which shrouds thy face,  
 Those thorns which form thy crown,  
 Shall I fail to discern thy grace?  
 Shall I my Lord disown?

My faith can penetrate the cloud,  
 All bloody though it be,  
 And there behold, without a cloud,  
 Unsullied majesty!

Ne'er in heaven's mansions, calm and bright  
 Did thy immortal brow  
 Send forth its pure celestial light  
 More gloriously than now.

Ne'er in the abode which beauty keeps,  
Did radiance from thy head  
Beam brighter, than when thou the steeps  
Of Golgotha didst tread.

To these humble souls Jesus Christ upon the cross is fair; fair as salvation, as love, as truth, as hope, because Jesus Christ upon the cross is all salvation, all love, all truth, all hope; fair with the beauty of grace, and the beauty of the law, because upon the cross to which his love nailed him, he represents to them at once all grace and all love, so that they speak of glory in the view of this ignominy, of joy in the view of those sorrows, of life in the view of that death. And this cross on which Jesus hangs motionless, on which to appearance Jesus no longer acts, no longer teaches, and scarcely speaks, shows them Jesus free, acting, speaking, teaching, walking, coming to them in triumph and glory from the bosom of his high home; so that no longer seeing what the carnal eye sees, and seeing what that eye sees not, they prostrate themselves before the accursed tree, exclaiming, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Is. lii. 7.

Truly, brethren, when all these features are united in thought, the astonishing thing is not that some look, turn, and cling to Christ upon the cross, but that the eyes of all mankind do not meet together upon him in common and fervent contemplation. To speak only of what men are accustomed to call fair, never was a fairer spectacle offered to their admiration. According to ancient sages, a good man opposing an unalterable countenance to the stroke of fortune, is a spectacle worthy of God himself. And shall the spectacle of a God, the victim of man's wretchedness, finding in each act of outrage which he suffers from them only an addi-

tional right to be exerted in their favor, shall this spectacle, brethren, if the other, was worthy of God, be unworthy of man? Has a charity all divine no more claim than a merely human virtue? Can God and mortal man be seriously put in comparison? And when God humbles himself to look upon man, is it too much for man, I say not merely to raise his eyes to God, but to contemplate him eternally, to contemplate him on his knees, and supplicate as his highest good, his only glory, that the sight which stirs and transforms his whole being may never be withdrawn?

I say *stirs and transforms his whole being*. Why do we speak here of admiration? the subject is conversion! Why do we speak of beauty? the subject is salvation! It is as saving, as capable of making us pass from death unto life, that we recommend this contemplation. We recommend it first to those who believe not, that having looked they may believe and live. Let them distinctly understand us. By the term *looking*, we mean not an examination of the proofs which establish the truth of the Christian religion, although the testimony borne in its favor has been confirmed by wonders and miracles, and divers other effects of divine power. Heb. ii. 4. We mean not by the term *looking*, the study of the Scriptures, although the word of prophecy, which is most sure, bears testimony throughout to Jesus. All this study is commendable and necessary, and far be it from us to dissuade you from a study which is in the present day too much neglected, and without which it is to be feared many will never come to look at Jesus Christ. But still, all these labors together are not worth and cannot supersede the look for which we plead, whereas this look alone has often superseded them. No doubt "faith cometh by hearing;" in other words, hearing is the origin of faith, its starting point; but it belongs to the eye to finish the uncompleted work of hearing. Where, in your opinion, is there a man who has heard much, and read much, but not looked? a man who has carefully

examined the proofs of the divinity of Christ, a man who has admitted them, and yet not looked at Christ? a man whom these proofs have convinced, that is to say vanquished, forced to believe, but whose faith, wholly passive, though it receives and yields to the truth, does not embrace it, and become united to it by a proper movement, and to whom, strange to say, the truth at once *is* and *is not*? a man who, conducted by his studies to the very foot of the cross, remains there with downcast eyes, never raising them towards the cross, nor towards him whom it bears and whose adorable blood is running down this accursed tree? Others have not been able to believe till they lifted their eyes and looked at Christ. Those, I admit, have believed but with a forced faith, on the account of the whole world, and not on their own personal account; with a faith which is to them only a yoke and burden; a faith which they support, but which does not support them until, passing beyond this terminated labor, this exhausted spring, they begin to look simply at Jesus. Are we rash in speaking of this look as a condition of true faith, when Jesus Christ himself has said, "Every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him," (*i. e.* every one who, having seen the Son, hath believed in him,) "hath everlasting life." These words, brethren, decidedly annex life to a look; not indeed to every kind of look, but to an attentive, earnest, prolonged look; a look more simple than that of observation; a look which looks, and does nothing more; a lively, unaffected, childlike look; a look in which the whole soul appears; a look of the heart and not of the intellect; one which does not seek to decompound its object, but receives it into the soul in all its entirety through the eye.

Have you thus looked at Jesus, you who deny Jesus, or who, without denying him, do worse, perhaps, since you reduce him to nothing? Oh! deny not, discard not this God-Man, this man of sorrows, before having looked at him. A single glance, simple, ingenuous, free from prejudice, has

sometimes united him to those who heard him spoken of for the first time ; the same grace will, perhaps, be granted to you. This much is certain : it will not be refused, (in fact has it ever been refused ?) to an assiduous and prolonged look, such as this holy object claims, and such as it deserves. When Jesus shall have been set forth, or rather, shall have *portrayed* himself, as the apostle calls it, before your eyes ; when, as the result of this profound contemplation, he shall have been crucified before you ; when you shall, for the first time, have beheld all the glory of his martyrdom, all the authority of his dying words, all the inconceivable love which mingles with this incomparable authority ; when, penetrating within the vail of his sufferings, even into the secret of his work, and the secret of his soul, you shall have seen God himself humbled in the person of Jesus Christ to the level of our miseries, and the infinitude of love revealing itself for the first time in the infinitude of power ; when you shall have in some measure (and in one sense this is real) seen with your eyes, and with your hands handled what we announce to you ; then, as naturally as light enters the eye, and air enters the lungs (though the eye perceives not that it has seen, nor the lungs that they have breathed), this great and unfathomable mystery of a love, with which we can, and without which we could not, form any proper idea of God, will enter your mind, which respiring it, so to speak, will not feel oppressed by it any more than the lungs feel oppressed by the air which they breathe,—so natural is this supernatural truth, and so much, without being foreseen or suspected by the soul of man, is it unconsciously anticipated, wished, and invited.

After having said *Look !* to those who believe not, shall we not say it to those who believe, I mean even those who believe truly ? Did we not, we should have a very superficial and false idea of faith. Faith is not a state in which we are placed; *once for all, on admitting the proof of religious*

truth. To believe is an action, an action of the soul, ever renewing its acceptance of what it believed at first, and constantly reuniting itself to it. If it is so, and if it is true that we cannot believe without looking, is it not clear that from the date of conversion, which had its commencement in a look, we must look incessantly? Others, perhaps, will say, It is not necessary to look incessantly, but to reflect incessantly on what has been seen. Certainly, brethren, we mean not to exclude reflection; there is even much of it necessarily in the look which we recommend. However, we would not be satisfied if the reflection did not come from the look, or if the look did not follow in the train of the reflection. After all, the object of Christianity is not an abstract truth. It is a fact, a person, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ crucified. These naturally offer themselves to the eye before offering themselves to the mind; and that which acts on our soul in the blessed way in which God has been pleased to appoint, is this object itself. We believe not in Christianity, but in Jesus Christ. Every Christian act done in the world is done, not by Christianity (which is itself only an effect), but by Jesus Christ. The relations which we bear as Christians are not intellectual relations, relations between our mind and a truth, but relations between person and person; relations between us men, and Jesus Christ both man and God. The object of our faith is invisible, but not impersonal. He is not seen with the eye of flesh, but, nevertheless, he is seen. We do not converse with him as with an idea, that is to say in substance as with ourselves, but as with a Being who is with us even to the end of the world. Whoever then, being a Christian, looks not, or looks little, is wanting to his faith, is wanting even to his name. His first vocation, his first interest, is to look often and much.

If these reflections, brethren, appear to you superfluous, and if you do not at first perceive any occasion for them, we *would say to you, that among convinced and sincere Chris-*

In addition to those who look to Jesus Christ, I see a number who do not look to him, or do not look suffi-

I see some, moreover, who look, but who do not, so truly as they ought, carry their looks and all their affections towards Christ crucified.

Some former fail to behold Jesus Christ, because they give no heed to thought or action, or because instead of contemplating Jesus Christ they contemplate themselves. With unbelieving thinkers, we would observe, that to think is not the same as to look; and to think of Jesus, not the same as to look to Jesus. We may be withdrawn from Jesus, estranged from Jesus, while thinking of him. It is not the person, but the ideal representation of Jesus that we have before our eyes. We reason about him as if we had an idea of which he is the name. We often name him, but we take his name in vain. We have before our eyes only the form of the object, not the object itself. We do this those who, in examining a fruit, its size, weight, shape, colour, or, should forget that it is savory and nutritive, and that it is life-giving, after having measured, weighed, sketched, and analysed it. It is not thus, at least it is not thus principally, that we ought to be occupied with Jesus Christ. To be occupied with him exclusively in this way, is not to be occupied with him. It is to fill every thing with his name, his image, and in other respects leave every thing void of him. When you think usefully of your Saviour, look to your

to the activity with which a sincere Christian devotes himself to the name of Christ, it indeed implies that he has, at least, looked to Jesus Christ; but continued action implies continued looking. So far from this, it may only detain the view elsewhere. Though setting out from him (as I am willing to believe), it may not return to him. His name may remain affixed to the work when the worker is no longer. Doubtless action is necessary.



Doubtless, it may be said with certainty of him who acts not, that he looks not, or even that he has never looked. But action, even sustained, indefatigable action, does not imply looking, at least in the same degree. The danger here is in the illusion, so easy for others and for ourselves, and more easy on the subject of action than of thought. For a faith which acts not, cannot flatter itself with being sincere ; whereas we easily persuade ourselves that we are in the truth, when we are laboring in the name of the truth. But be this as it may, action does not dispense with looking, and is not a substitute for looking ; and though it should persevere, and gain warmth by its own movement, I still repeat what I have said : for its duration and progress are no proof of a revival of life, or of intimate communion with him in whose name we act. No, brethren ; without resorting to any uncharitable or disparaging explanation, it is certain that we very often act because we have acted ; we continue because we have begun ; we devote ourselves to our work because it is a work, or because it is ours. Our first impulse is exhausted, but habit and preoccupation give us another ; we no longer imitate Christ, but we imitate ourselves, we obey ourselves. Custom, without the help of any principle, links our present to our past ; and those first works, so earnest at the outset, become at length mechanical, and almost involuntary works. Looking alone can render to action, not that feverish vivacity which our passions will always give it in abundance, but that calm force, that degree, that delicate precision, that beauty which passion can never give.

There are persons, in fine, who look, and even contemplate, but contemplate themselves. We have already said how necessary this self-consideration is, and we need not repeat ; but though it be impossible to contemplate our misery without being urged towards Christ, or to contemplate Jesus Christ without being recalled to a sense of our

misery, this misery is not, however, the object of saving faith, and the view of this misery cannot place in our heart the elements of life and earnestness of salvation. It must even be confessed that, though powerless to save, it is able to destroy. It alternately discourages and sours; it even does both at the same time. It exhausts, and in barren regrets enervates the soul which lives on joy and hope, but dies of sadness; and the only life which remains to it in this death, the only life which springs from this death, is ill humor, peevishness, murmuring, and envy. The knowledge of the law of God serves only to aggravate the evil, by depriving us not only of any delusive hopes entertained, but of all remaining energy and strength. Thenceforth, strange to say, the position of him who knows not the law of God is more favorable than the position of him who knows it. The law *worketh death* in every sense of the word; for after we have learned from it not only the full extent of its demands, but also that, as the apostle expresses it, "the judgment of God against those who commit such things is that they are worthy of death," we are thereby dead already, because we have ceased to trust in ourselves, or to hope in God. But this, you will say, does not apply to the Christian who is not subject to the law, and for whom the ministry of death by Moses has been succeeded by the ministry of righteousness by Jesus Christ. Yes, it does apply, when he does not assiduously contemplate Jesus Christ. It does apply to him when there is a principle of death, a partial death, in the practice of tasting and relishing his misery, instead of tasting and relishing the goodness of God. He does not, I admit, fall into despair; because, though on the brink of it, he is held back by the remembrance of Jesus Christ, as by a chain which becomes perceptible at the precise moment when it is all drawn out and not another step could be made towards the abyss, unless the chain were to give way. He falls not into despair, but into deep despondency. The soul, not-

withstanding of some glimmerings which ever and anon come to it from the cross, is habitually sad, and so far feeble. It deemed it sufficient to look at Jesus Christ once for all; but either he must be looked at incessantly, or we must look incessantly at sin. The eye, at least if it is not blind, has no alternative; and if it is certain that we shall not lose sight of our misery by looking at Christ crucified, because this misery is, as it were, engraved upon the cross, it is equally certain that in looking at our misery, we may lose sight of Jesus Christ, because the cross is not naturally engraved on the image of our misery. An apostle was blamed for wishing to put his hands into the wounds of his risen Master. We all concur in blaming him, and ask, Why did he not rather put them into his own wounds, the wounds of his soul? But in another view, the example of Thomas should furnish us with a rule; for it is not into our own wounds, but into those of Jesus, that we ought to put our hands; and it is in this sense that we say to the class of believers whom we have in view, Look; yes, look every where; look to the depth of your misery, but look more to Jesus Christ, at least never consent to see yourself and your sin, except through the medium of Jesus Christ, and his triumphant love.

And to speak not merely of our misery, but generally of attention to our impressions and successive states, we cannot, brethren, be too much on our guard against giving to this matter the time and interest which we owe, above all, to the contemplation of our Saviour. Here, you understand, there is no exclusive, no absolute system. We defend the sacred cause of the contemplation of Jesus without condemning self-examination. To do so were to condemn the Gospel which sanctions and recommends it. This sanction may be seen in the words of St. Paul, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you?"

2 Cor. xiii. 5. These words would have no meaning if self-examination was forbidden. It must also be admitted that when St. John declares, "Hereby (by loving the brethren) we know that we are of the truth," he authorizes, nay, he obliges us to have recourse to that self-examination against which we are apparently desirous to put you on your guard. But in fact we only mean to guard you against the abuse of it, and it is of importance to do so. The very principle which leads to this tendency is suspicious; and since the subject is self-examination, let us first examine ourselves in regard to this examination. We will perceive that personal feelings have always much to do with the practice which, moreover, never fails to nourish these feelings and strengthen them. When occupied with ourselves, should it even be in condemning ourselves and hating ourselves, we feel a bitter pleasure, a torturing delight; and this pleasure is so dangerous that it becomes necessary to wean ourselves from it, even although it should have been purchased at the cost of a deep humiliation.

Another danger not less great, is gradually to make void the cross of Christ, and subtilely substitute for the free pardon of God something which at first sight appears not to be a work, but, notwithstanding, is one; to deduct somewhat from the absolute value of the work which has been done out of us, to bestow it upon the work which has been done in us, and which, because done in us, is readily believed to be done by us; to cease casting ourselves entirely upon the Divine mercy; and, to say all in a word, to convert salvation into a matter and question of feeling. It is not, it cannot be so: there are no degrees of less or more in that which is absolute; and as Jesus Christ has not died for some more, and for others less, he has not died more or less for each of us in respect of our state at any given moment. Far be it from me, brethren, to encourage the fatal idea, that it is not necessary to take heed to what *we are*, nor, consequently, to what we do; an

idea of which the ultimate but inevitable consequence would be to make us feel a complacency in the contrast between our faith and our moral state, to feel proud in proportion to the strength of the contrast, and on the ground of its being a more simple and sincere faith, to give the first place to the faith which is the more confident, the fewer grounds it has for confidence. And thus we would end by thinking ourselves nearer to God, the farther our life was estranged from him. When the Apostle spoke with approbation of those who hoped against hope (Rom. iv. 18), this was not the class of Christians whom he had in view, although they certainly do hope against hope. What would become of the exhortation to vigilance, if the duty of self-examination were not recognized? How can we watch over the life, without watching over the heart, out of which are the issues of life? In fine, how can we avoid judging, when all systems hold that salvation consists in communion of heart and will with the Father of our spirits, and that this communion, if impaired, would impair the joys of heaven and salvation? Does not St. Paul lend us his authority, when he says that God has given us in his Spirit (not in his word) the earnest (or a payment to account) of our inheritance; and that his Spirit (not his word) bears testimony with our spirit that we are his children? Now there is nothing magical in the agency of the Spirit. The Spirit is known by fruits, inclinations, works, the whole life; and it is accordingly in this life proceeding from the Spirit that we receive the earnest or foretaste of heaven.

But while admitting all this, and prepared, if necessary, to defend it, we say, brethren, as the result of the preceding remarks, that this contemplation of ourselves, if it be not unceasingly purified by the contemplation of Jesus Christ, readily becomes egotistical. If not subordinated to the contemplation of Jesus Christ, it leads us step by step to our own righteousness, to salvation by works, from thence to pride, if we forget *ourselves*, or to listlessness and despondency, if we see our-

selves as we are ; so that at last the noble principle which salvation by grace should have placed in our hearts, that principle whose place cannot be supplied, and out of which there is nought but falsehood, deceit, and rebellion ; that principle, I say, slowly undermined by self and curiosity, fades from our creed, which is then like an old tree standing with its bark after the wood and pith have wasted away.

As to those of whom I have also spoken, who, looking to Jesus Christ, do not look to him supremely, nor return to him constantly, our language is : There is only embarrassment, obscurity, anguish, sterile fatigue, in all the systems, with regard to Jesus Christ, which are drawn successively from the Gospel, while they are only systems. Speculation concerning Jesus Christ, mere speculation, however sublime and necessary, is withering and deadly. Not that we adopt the view of those who say, " Look at the cross and look at nothing more, speak of the cross, and of the cross only ; give yourselves no concern with the fact that St. Paul, St. John, and, before them, the Saviour himself, spoke of other things. It is true that they have spoken of regeneration, without which we cannot enter the kingdom of God ; and of holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. They had reasons which to us are unknown, but don't you act so. For it is very clear that if you speak of the necessity of a new birth, it is just as if you were ordering men to be born anew, and that if you enter into detail on the subject of sanctification, you open the door to a self-righteousness, forming a species of unhallowed traffic which Christ Jesus drove from the sanctuary."

This, brethren, is not the language in which we will address you. There is no choice in the Gospel ; every thing must be taken, nothing left ; and if Paul, when speaking of the productions of the natural world, could say, " Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. iv. 4), may not we say

the same of the Gospel, that other creature, in which assuredly every thing is good ; only, with the apostle let us add, "if it be received with thanksgiving ;" words which, with reference to our subject, we interpret thus : Provided that your gratitude towards Jesus Christ, provided that your dependence on the mere grace of God, provided that your confidence in your Saviour, overrule and pervade the whole ; provided that you combine this idea along with each of your other ideas, in order to complete and explain them ; provided that, after having learned many things, you are able to say, One thing I know, and would know, "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Why, brethren, cannot we accustom your eyes and our own to this simple looking towards Jesus which has been the strength and unction of believers in all ages ? Why cannot we imprint on your soul, and primarily on our own, the salutary impression, that all the trials, perplexities, and difficulties of the Christian life of their own accord vanish away in this blessed unity of the Christian look. This look, so simple that the humblest child is capable of it, suffices for all. It is the cause of the most different effects, the cure of the most opposite evils ; it is equally victorious over the difficulties of systems, and the perplexities of doubt, the assaults of pride, and the assaults of despair ; the temptations of covetousness, and those of sorrow ; the bitterness of hatred, and the weakness of natural affection. When we behold the cross, there proceeds from it a light which disperses all darkness, and a flame of love which consumes all hatred. "Who shall stand when he appeareth !" exclaimed the last of the prophets, with eyes upturned towards the east. And we too, say, What anguish, what pain, what bitterness can there be when Jesus Christ appears ; when love divine, love without measure, unconditional, unlimited, breaks forth upon us in the mystery of the cross ! All reasonings, all combinations, all counsels, all methods, are not as regards the heart or even the understanding, worth a look directed to Jesus ; and though

all these means are useful, (who would deny that they are ?) there is still need of the look, still need of the light to quicken all, and give strength to all. Let it only appear ; it has only to be seen. "They looked to him," says the Psalmist, "and were lightened " (Ps. xxxiv. 5), i. e. at once illumined, warmed, quickened, consoled.

Meditate, brethren, on the idea (which perhaps too seldom presents itself to your mind), that the view of the cross is all-sufficient. We perceive certain uses of it ; we do not comprehend all of them. We understand how it carries consolation into a soul bending under the burden of sin ; but do we understand that it is equally good for distresses of the flesh ? We comprehend how this view gives once for all a general direction to our life ; do we also comprehend how on every practical question that can be raised, it gives direct counsel, and the means of solution ? Its light, like that of the sun, is not only boundless and immense, but minutely subdivided so as to penetrate into every fold, into every chink which we open to it, in our life. We comprehend how, being offered as a cure to our wretchedness, it gives us the knowledge and the measure of our wretchedness ; but do we also comprehend how well fitted it is to dissipate all doubts as to the truth of the Gospel, and all the perplexity introduced into our mind by the unfortunate complication of the systems formed out of the Gospel ? We comprehend the benefit of looking in times of trouble and darkness ; do we also comprehend the benefit of looking when the mind is clear, the heart at ease, the life prosperous,—being not only brightness in brightness, repose in repose, prosperity in prosperity, but all of these in reality and perfection ? No, the uses of the cross are not all equally known by all ; no, none of us make (far from it !) all that might be made of it, because none feel sufficiently that it is proper for all, and sufficient for all, that it contains all, and is all, gives all on earth, and promises all in heaven.



Brethren, it is one of the wonders peculiar to the Gospel, that when we would distinguish between the means which it offers and the end which it proposes, between sacrifices and their reward, the present and the future, earth and heaven, we find a difficulty in doing it, so much oneness is there in the destiny of man, so much oneness in truth, so much are duty and happiness, though separated in our mind in consequence of the fall, substantially one and the same. In the Gospel, the reward of loving, is to love more ; the reward of seeing, to see still better. We have exhorted you to look, as a duty of wisdom and Christian prudence. Well, the glory and happiness of heaven will consist in looking. Who knows not that this is the term which the sacred writers most frequently use to denote celestial blessedness ? Who knows not that in their language to be saved, is to see God ? Witness him who declares that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Witness Jesus Christ himself, who proclaims, Blessed are the poor in heart, for they shall see God. Witness St. John, who animates Christians to fidelity, by the hope of one day seeing God as he is. But doubtless it is not to the God of Sinai ; it is to Him who at Golgotha drew aside the last vail which obscured his glory ; it is to Him, of whom Job was thinking when, racked by affliction of every kind, he exclaimed, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." It was of the same God that David rapturously exclaimed, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Ps. xvii. 15. And certainly you have no cause to wonder that eternal happiness has been represented to you under these figures, you who know the joy, the incomparable joy, which is felt in contemplating Jesus Christ. Of all the promises with which the prospect of the

heavenly mansions could be embellished, none give such delight to your heart as this. You shall look on him whom you have pierced. When one of our fellow-creatures has by word and deed given us proof of his love and sympathy we think that a sight of him could lend us nothing, tell us nothing more. Of what consequence, we think, the features of his countenance and the form of his person? And yet we long to see him. And when we have seen him, it seems to us that from that moment only we know who he is, and that we did not know before. The sound of his voice, and his looks, give us quite a new impression, and this moment constitutes a new period in our relation to him. This, brethren, gives only an idea, but still an idea of the personal view of Jesus reserved to believers in another life. He shall doubtless have been with them to the end of their course, as he is with his Church to the end of the world. They will have known and conversed with him. Some, even the favored contemporaries of his ministry, will have seen him with the eyes of their flesh; but to see him with that eye which pierces even to the centre of the soul, and which St. Paul has characterized so emphatically when he says that "we shall know even as we are known;" to penetrate even into the holiest of all, I mean to the very depth of this ineffable love; to feel it as we feel our own affections, to taste incessantly, and drink long draughts of this incomparable love; to take part in all the thoughts of the Beloved, to receive his divine communications, to be one with him, as he is one with his Father, to draw inspiration every moment from the mysterious virtue of his look, and say "It was this glorious Prince of eternity that I pierced; He whom my eyes behold is at once my victim, and my God!" Vain words, to express what is inexpressible, and yet sufficient to open to the eye of hope a rapturous and boundless prospect! May it open upon each of us! But in order that our unfaltering look may not only *pierce the clouds*, but bear the splendor

which seems to overpower it, let it long rest on Jesus crucified. Thus let it prepare to sustain the view of this dazzling future. Thus let it have learned to see heaven on the earth, before seeing heaven in heaven.

## LOVE IN THE SPIRIT.

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Epaphras "declared unto us your love in the Spirit.—COL. i. 8.

A FEW lines before our text, the Apostle himself informs us that he was delighted to hear of the faith of the Colossians, and their love towards all the saints. He here returns to what Epaphras had told him, but he names only one of the objects which he mentioned at first. He here merely mentions, and seems to rejoice, in the love of the Colossians; only he adds to the word *love* another word which characterizes it. "Your love," says he, "in the Spirit," or according to the Spirit. Our discourse, as it proceeds, will explain why the Apostle, after having mentioned faith and love, now mentions only love. But our text invites us, (and for this we have chosen it,) to make ourselves distinctly acquainted with the subject of Paul's joy, to inquire into the nature of this love in the Spirit, which the Colossians possessed as an inestimable treasure. The better we know it, the better will we comprehend the joy of St. Paul; the better we know it, we shall perhaps see cause for sadness, but in return we shall know ourselves; important knowledge, the possession of which, how vexing soever it may be, is always ground for *congratulation*.

In what, in the words of our text, does St. Paul rejoice ? or at least, what great news has he learned ? Great news certainly, and of great joy. He has learned that the Colossians *live*, or to speak more correctly, he has learned that by the power of the Spirit they have passed from death unto life. This is our affirmation at the outset, this it remains for us to prove.

*Life* is a profound mystery : what it is essentially is known to none but Him who has life in himself. But if we are unable to define it, we can recognize it. We know that it is a superior mode of existing, and its principal characteristic is this : the living being is endowed with a power of motion which is proper to it, and the conditions of which are within it, whether this motion takes place only among the different parts of which it is composed, and, so to speak, from itself to itself, or transports it as a whole from one place to another. If we add that this motion, which we make the characteristic of life, did not take place once for all on the formation of the object, but continues incessantly ; that the very continuation of this motion is life, and that its interruption is death, we have sufficient means of distinguishing living beings from those which do not live.

Moreover, all lives are not the same life. There is one life of the plant, another of the animal, another of man. One being, as the plant, has only one mode of living ; another, as the animal, has two ; man is more richly provided. He has several lives. He has that of the animal, since he has a body ; that of the intellect, since he thinks ; that of the heart, since he loves. These are three sorts of proper motion and internal activity, which exist united in him alone, at least here below.

Let us stop here for a moment. No one surely will contradict us when we say that the life of the intellect is thought. These two things, I mean the faculty which is called *intellect*, and the act which is called thought, are so clearly

united in the mind of every man, that the name of the act is often substituted in discourse for the name of the faculty which produces it ; so that we say indifferently, that man is distinguished from other animals by intellect, or is distinguished from them by thought. It would be as impossible to conceive of an intellect without thought, as of a body without extent ; in other words, a body which should not occupy any portion of space, and yet be a body. Every one understands that intellect, separated from thought, is nothing ; for, as the intellect does not see itself, as we have no way of perceiving it but by its acts, we could have no knowledge of the intellect if we had not seen it in operation. It is not in regard to us a substance, a thing, a being, but an agency. Now, what would an agency be which should not act ? what an intellect which should not think ?

On this there is no dispute. But it is different with the heart. Though we perceive at the first glance that the life of the intellect is to think, it does not seem so clear that the life of the heart is to love. And yet it is certain that if we recognize the life of the heart as a separate life, which is not to be confounded either with the life of the body or with that of the intellect, the moment we should wish to say what the life of the heart is, at once, without intending it, we should name love. Any one may make the trial. Any one may see if it be possible for him to give an idea of the life of the heart into which love does not enter. What we call the heart can no more be seen, no more be known in itself, than can the intellect. Without the acts which the heart produces, we should not even have an idea of a life of the heart. We would never have invented the name. In regard to the life of the heart, then, we must proceed as we did in regard to the life of the intellect. We must ask, not what the heart is, (to this there is no answer,) but what the heart does. Well, if the heart does something, it loves. It is its property to love, as it is the *property of the plant to vegetate*, and the

property of the intellect to think. It loves, some one will say, but it hates also. Certainly it does. How can it love without hating? How walk towards the east without turning your back on the west? How love a thing without hating its opposite? This hatred is the necessary counterpart of love. This hatred is love reflected back on itself, unless, indeed, you choose to say that love is the necessary counterpart of hatred, or that love is reflected hatred. This would place hatred in the front and love in the rear of our moral life, and would be equivalent to saying that the life of the heart consists, not as we said, in loving, but in hating. There would be no alternative between these definitions, and as no man would dare to say, or could even think, that the life of the heart consists in hating, every one would be constrained to admit that the life of the heart consists in loving.

But why, then, do we not say that to live with the heart is both to *love* and to *hate*? We do not say it, because hatred is not the true object of the heart; because, as we have said, the heart hates only by contrast, and because it loves. Because it is impossible for an artist, in employing the power of fire, to produce fire without making ashes, shall we conclude that the ashes which form the residuum of combustion, are the object and the end of the artist's labors? Hatred forms the ashes of the fire which love kindles in our hearts, but it is not on these ashes that the heart lives. Hatred is only a form of love; love only is real, love alone is something. Love leads, it is true, to a sort of hatred; but no sort of hatred can lead to love. He who begins with hatred will end with hatred. Nay, more; he who begins with hatred does not, we may rest assured, hate what he ought to hate. He perhaps imagines that he hates evil; but if he loves not what is good, he does not hate evil as evil, as sin, as enmity with God. He hates it for some other reason (and there are many different reasons), than because it is evil. Nothing but the love of goodness begets a true hatred of evil.

We repeat then, brethren, that as regards the heart, life is nothing but love. The hatred which springs not from love, the hatred which is not a form of love, hatred in itself and for itself, is not a life, but on the contrary, a death of the heart. It is no more the life of the heart than error is the life of reason. If you insist that the reason which errs, and the heart which hates, live notwithstanding, you must admit that a life whose property is to destroy, strongly resembles a death; and we may say of persons by whom the heart which was given them to love is employed in hating, that they are dead while they live.

It will be admitted, brethren, that every action, to have a meaning, must have an object. Thus, the action of the intellect has an object, and this object is truth. The heart also must have an object, and if this object is not the unison of all moral beings and the happiness of all sensible beings, what is it? It must of necessity be the opposite. It is, instead of unison, discord; instead of the happiness, it is the misery of all beings. There is no means of escaping from this conclusion when once the other is rejected, unless by saying that the life of the heart has no object. But to say this were to say that this life has no existence, and that the heart is no more than a word.

The life of the heart, then, if it has one, is love. And this life has two opposites, or, if you will, it is subject to two deaths, the one of which is called egotism, the other hatred. If the life of the heart is to love, the heart is dead when it loves itself only, the heart is dead when it hates. But these two deaths, properly speaking, constitute only one. For, on the one hand, hatred is not conceived without egotism. It is impossible to form an idea of a man, whose heart, given up to hatred, should at the same time be detached from his own interests, and ready to sacrifice them. It is even probable that those whom he hates are those who stand in his way, or give him umbrage; *those in whom some of his appetites*



have encountered opposition. No man hates for the sake of hating. On the other hand, it is impossible for the egotist to confine himself to egotism; that is, to love himself exclusively, without hating others; those, at least, whose pretensions or rights encounter his; those who, by word or action, have offended him in one or other of his interests. Hatred is only egotism in its most decided form, its necessary development, the poisonous fruit of a poisonous root. If egotism is a death, hatred is a living death. Might we not add that the heart cannot be empty, and that egotism is not able to fill it; that hatred bears more resemblance to life; that hatred, though a depraved action of the heart, is still an action; that it gives the heart occupation, which it always needs, and that for this additional reason if we do not love we must hate?

Let us now return to the point from which we set out. There are in the world several kinds of life, of which that of man is one. In man himself there are several kinds of life; and we have already distinguished them. Let us now observe that no life, either in the world or in man, is equivalent to any other life. The life of the plant is inferior to that of the animal, the life of the animal inferior to that of the man, and in man himself the life of the body is beneath that of the intellect, that of the intellect beneath moral life. This is because these three lives, portioned out among other beings, meet together only in man, and correspond to three worlds which have not the same value in our eyes, the material, the intellectual, and the moral world. Ask the first peasant you meet, and he will tell you without prompting that to be intelligent is far better than to be handsome, and that to be good is far better than to be intelligent. On this point there is no hesitancy, no disagreement among mankind. Matter and form are far inferior to knowledge, and knowledge cannot be put on a level with love. Moreover, what is it that constitutes the value of each of these lives? Its rela-

tion with a superior life, the faculty which it has of reaching it. Matter is of value only in so far as it is subordinate and does service to intellect, and intellect is degraded when it does not terminate in love. If love in order to find objects and exercises has need of intellect and matter, love has in itself dignity and beauty: we cannot, it is true, conceive it separated from intellect, but it exists not for intellect while intellect exists for it. Now may we not say of a being which unites in itself several lives, that if it wants the principal life, that for which it has received all the others, it lives not, although it possesses the others; because these others were not its end, which must be sought in the life of which it is destitute. It were different to be deprived of a life to which one has not been destined, and for which one has not been organized. Thus the plant lives although it does not feel, for it has not been made to feel; and the animal lives although it does not think, because it has not been made to think: but for man made to love, man whose destination is love, it were vain to feel and vain to think; if he loves not, he lives not. Thus the higher life of each being is its true life, in the absence of which it may be regarded as dead.

Each of our subordinate lives, then, is something in relation to the higher or true life; but in itself, and separately it is nothing. When the higher life, which is the end, is wanting, it is not correct to say that there is less of life; there is no half, nor third, nor two-thirds of life; there is either life or no life. No doubt we may love more or love less; here degrees are easily understood; here the differences may be endless; but between the being which loves in any degree whatever, and that which loves not, there is all the difference between something and nothing, existence and non-existence, life and death. I say not only between that which loves and that which vegetates, but between that which loves and that which thinks, although there is also a considerable distance between that which thinks and that which

vegetates; but considerable as it is, it is as nothing in comparison with the distance between the being that loves, and the being that loves not. Truth assuredly is a great thing, and yet if you do not set truth above love, and, consequently, set it beneath, you say rightly, that without love truth is useless. Go still further, and say boldly, that without love there is no truth, since there is no unity or happiness. Does this surprise you? Think better of it. The word *truth* does not designate merely an accurate view of the mind, it does not designate an idea only, it has something more substantial; it designates a thing, a fact, a relation. Truth exists in action before it exists in idea, in things before it is in words. A thing is true when it is what it ought to be, as a word is true when it says what it ought to say; a thing, in like manner, is false when it is not what it ought to be. If a man, then, is not what he ought to be, and does not what he ought to do, it would be in vain for him to know the truth, he would not be in the truth according to the meaning of St. John, who says that we know that we are in the truth by loving our brethren. Truth, in the creation of God, consists in a complete correspondence among things. Now he who loves not does violence to this general correspondence which constitutes truth, and, as much as in him lies, introduces falsehood into the bosom of truth. There is no room, therefore, to draw the distinction and say, Such a one has not love, but he has truth. No, if he loves not, he has not truth.

On this point the Gospel exhibits not the least indecision, the least obscurity. It uniformly gives supremacy to the life of the heart, or to love; it makes every thing in man tend or aspire towards love as the end and reality of human life. Jesus Christ never proposed knowledge to his disciples as an end, but as a mean. The end is that all may be made complete in unity. Now unity is love. St. Paul declares that knowledge puffeth up, but that love edifieth. Weigh well these words. It does not say mistaken knowledge or error,

but knowledge in general, and, consequently, truth as well as error. Love edifieth. Weigh this expression also. To edify is to construct, to build, to erect a solid monument or habitable abode; in two words, to produce a positive result. This is the true meaning of the word *edify*. Thus, then, in truth (if it is only thought) there is inflation, wind, nothing; in love is the positive and the real. Such is the doctrine of St. Paul. It is also evidently that of St. John, when he says that he who loves God knows him. Besides, knowledge is subordinate to love; but here love is presented as the means and condition of knowledge. This brings us back to what we lately said, namely, that he who has truth, if he has not love, has not even truth. And which of you, brethren, has not at present in his mind the magnificent passage in which St. Paul, humbling human and even angelical knowledge at the feet of love, exclaims, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am nothing. Though I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries, and though I possess all knowledge, but have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.

It is not even enough to oppose a whole life of thought to a whole life of love. The things are not thus measured. Here quantity, extent, duration, are nothing; nature is all. All the sublimest thoughts of all the profoundest philosophers of all the ages of the world, when weighed in the balance, are not worth one single movement of charity. If it be objected that great thoughts come from the heart; that there are things which cannot reach the intellect without coming through the soul; and that there is, perhaps, some love in some of the speculations of these great intellects, we are far from gainsaying this. We joyfully place to the account of the higher and true life all the love which may exist in their thoughts; but we, nevertheless, maintain that in those fine thoughts in which there is love, it is love which

constitutes life ; that thought, as thought, is not life ; that the peasant who loves is superior in dignity to the philosopher who loves not ; that a single act, a single movement of true love, carries it over the most brilliant discoveries, and the sublimest thoughts.

Now, if we are correct in the observations which we have made, we are entitled to affirm again what we affirmed at the outset. St. Paul, we said, is glad because the Colossians live, or because they have passed from death unto life. Truly life is love ; the Colossians live since they love.

But St. Paul does not say simply that they love ; he says that they love in the spirit. Now, if he adds these words, if he distinguishes between several kinds of love, it is not, undoubtedly, to point out the weakest and least excellent, but, on the contrary, to point out the best.

Love in the spirit, says the Apostle. What is this spirit ? Is it spirit in general ; spirit in opposition to matter ; spirit considered as the most excellent part of ourselves, so that, instead of love in the spirit, it had been equally well styled spiritual love ? We are persuaded that Paul meant love in the Spirit of God, the love which the Spirit of God teaches and inspires ; but we might, without danger, consent to the former interpretation, well assured that, unconsciously to those who propose it, it includes that which we prefer ; well assured that in the first we shall find the second.

What, in fact, is meant by the term *spirit* without the addition of the name of God, as, for example, in the passage, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak ?"

\* It means that better part of us, which St. Paul terms

\* The paragraphs with an asterisk, are mere notes from a first copy which the Author had not been able to reduce into proper form. They are introduced here to supply blanks, and indicate the train of his ideas, the connection of which could not otherwise be perceived.

we, (Rom. vii. 14-16,) and which the Spirit of God has come to set at liberty ; it is the part of our being by which we held communion with God. It is neither the body nor the soul ; it is the perception of the divine and eternal. To love in the spirit then is, in every case, to love according to, or by the Spirit of God, just as to love according to the Spirit of God, is the same thing as to love spiritually. We are certain, then, to find the one interpretation in the other.

\* Let us attend to the first ; to love according to the Spirit of God. Here again it will be said that the original signifies to love by the Spirit of God. It is of little consequence. He who loves by the Spirit of God, doubtless loves according to the Spirit of God. Now the Spirit of God is first a spirit, and secondly the Spirit of God.

\* Love according to the Spirit is a spiritual love ; in other words, that which loves in us is no part of our carnal being, but that new man, whose object is the true, the just, the divine, the immortal.

\* Love according to the Spirit then, is not that gross love which produces or stimulates concupiscence, and of which it is said, that the will of the flesh is death. And we extend the meaning of this expression, (will of the flesh, Rom. viii. 6,) to all the loves of simple taste, preference, suitableness, community of party-spirit, community of fear or hatred, custom.

\* Neither is love according to the Spirit an interested affection. These two words both apparently and really contradict one another, and yet it is certain that we may delude ourselves in regard to them. We love people (with a certain affection,) for the happiness which they give or promise, for the respect which they secure us, for the pleasure which we find in intercourse with them, and the indulgence which they show to our tastes. Interest, egotism even mingle with the purest affections—a mother's love.

\* Love according to the Spirit is not natural affection, even detached from sense and egotism. Not that the Spirit condemns natural affections; on the contrary, it consecrates and renovates them. Their absence proves his absence or withdrawal, but their presence does not prove his presence. These instincts are lovely with a beauty which is not personal to us, but with the beauty of God, as the azure of the sky, the perfume of flowers, the melody of sounds; it is the beauty of God in the moral world. It is necessary that there should be the idea of duty, obedience, principle, adherence to universal order. This obedience is not love, but love without this principle, is no more love according to the Spirit.

But this Spirit of which the Apostle speaks, is the Spirit of God. And you imagine not that the Spirit of God can inspire man with an affection in which God himself has no part. For it is the Spirit of a jealous God, the Spirit of God who created us only for himself, the Spirit of God who wills to have us wholly; the Spirit of God, who has commanded us to love him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. If it is so, how should there be in our life a single movement, in our soul a single point, from which God could be absent, from which God could be excluded? If it is so, what portion will God have in our affections? Do we give God a part? Does God share with his creature? And if he permits us to love another being than himself, can it be otherwise than in him, and for him? Will not God be present in every object of our love? Will he not be its sanction, its tie, its beauty, its force, and also its limit? Assuredly he does not forbid these affections; on the contrary, he commands them. The second commandment like unto the first, is to love our brethren, and observe that even in this commandment, all God's rights are reserved. If he has a right to command us to love our brethren, it is because in the first place he has a

right to be loved. But though he should not have commanded this love, though he should only have permitted it, it would only be on condition of his ruling our affections, and finding us always ready to sacrifice them to him, to tear our hearts from them when they displease him, in fine, to hate them rather than prefer them to him. Such is the only mode of loving according to the Spirit of God. To love otherwise, is to love according to the spirit of the world and the devil, which are the enemies of God.

What did we say above of the object of this love? This object is unity, but doubtless a complete unity, a unity embracing whatever is made to be united. True love ought to tend towards this unity, and rest in it only. Do you believe, then, that after having embraced all the creatures, it can stop short of the Creator? Do you believe that this love can embrace all, unite all, except Him who is the very principle of all love, the author of all love, and who consequently must be the first, the supreme object of all love? Strange unity, brethren! or rather what rupture, what rending, what contradiction! The world on one side, God on the other! Love refusing to mount to the source of love! Man refusing to apply to God that strength of love which he has received from God himself! Man withdrawing his love from the only Being perfectly lovely, and lavishing it upon what is only lovely by him, lovely in him! or rather man, with a mockery still more insulting, consenting to love God, but after all others, less than all others, as if to act thus were to love him! as if to throw to him the remains of our heart, (I tremble to think how true this description is) were not to offer him our hatred and contempt! Once more, why do you speak of unity? No! the unity which is not complete is not unity. No; you appear to unite yourselves to a particular order, only to separate yourselves from general order. No; your attachment to the creatures, serves only to manifest your separa-



tion from the Creator, and prove that you are out of order and unity.

And what is this inferior unity on which you plume yourself, and which you pretend to realize in your human affections? How can it be real? How can truth dwell with falsehood? How, incapable as you are of loving the only Being perfectly lovely, can you be capable of truly loving your brethren? How, after such fearful injustice, can you be just? How can hearts so unnatural flatter themselves that they love? Admit that all love of a higher nature is impossible to those who do not love God, and that all love which is not according to the Spirit of God, cannot be a love according to the Spirit.

The Gospel does not authorize us to conceive the idea of two independent unities, each of which might be a unity. They are unities only in virtue of their relation and natural correspondence. Unity among men is only a continuation of the unity between men and God. Jesus Christ asked his Father that his disciples might be one, but he did not separate this request from another, namely, that his disciples might be one with him, and with his Father. He does not say to his Father merely, "I pray that they may be one," but, "I pray that they may be one in us." It is thus only, according to the declaration of our divine Master, that this unity will be consummated. John xvii. 23.

We now know what is meant by affection or love in the Spirit. It is above and beyond all our attachments by the senses, by interest, and by nature, which we have enumerated. It is an affection of which God is the centre, which includes in it duty, which attaches itself to the soul, and aspires to eternity.

To know what it is, it was only necessary for us, so to speak, to name it. The name alone has informed us of all. But could we have defined that which is not, and cannot be?

Could we have developed only what is contained in a simple idea? Could we have described only an imaginary object? And in order to define love in the Spirit, have we no other and better method than this cold analysis? Ought we, in one word, to confine our exposition to such words as these—Such would be love in the Spirit if this love existed, if this love was possible? In truth, would we have made much progress, and employed our time and yours to good purpose? What would it avail you to know that which is not, which never was, and which never will be? But it is impossible that it should be so. If this love was not in the nature of things, if it had not a foundation in God and in us, rest assured that we would not have even this idea of it. We could not have described to you a thing which could not exist. This love in the Spirit is possible, is real. I appeal to its name.

Let us look for it then upon the earth in human hearts, if the earth can offer us an example of it. Let us interrogate history, our own recollections, and the facts which are passing around us. Let us ask from the past, from the present, from ourselves, images in which we may contemplate it, not as an idea, but as a reality. But could our eye long hesitate? Would it not, before fixing itself on any man, rise at once to the Captain of our salvation? Did he love according to the Spirit or according to the world—he to whom the Spirit was given without measure, he who, living in the world, was not of the world, and would not pray for the world? Of a truth all the peculiar characteristics of love in the Spirit were manifested in each of the affections of Jesus, and an easier process of learning their nature would have been to seek them in him, than even in the nature of spiritual affection; for who would not perceive that the glory of the Father was his first object, and that the whole purpose of his life on earth was included in the great work of manifesting the name of God to those whom God had given him out of the world.

What was the noblest and first of the ties between man and man, according to him whose whole life exemplified the memorable declaration, "Whosoever will do the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother?" No doubt natural affections, and, consequently particular attachments, were not unknown to him who wept over the closed tomb of Lazarus, and the open sepulchre at Jerusalem. But to what a height did he elevate these particular affections above their sphere of individuality, and into the sphere to which he transports them with himself, where could still recognize them? Who could see in them only private affections? Who could suspect him of having for one instant sought himself in the objects of his affection? Who could show us in any of these affections the mere influence of instinct or custom? Who, on the contrary, is not forced to acknowledge, that if instinct and habit had any influence in the ties which he formed upon earth, they both disappear in the idea of holiness; that with him love was virtue, and that, if we may so speak, he added charity to each of his affections? To him it belonged, according to the expression of St. John, to teach us what love is. It was he who brought into the world both the name and the thing, by dedicating to it, by his life and by his death, the principle of a love, not obscure like instinct, but luminous like will; a love in which neither sin, nor self-interest, nor nature, nor accident, has any part; a love in which the immortal spirit seeks the immortal spirit; a love wholly united and amalgamated with the love of God, and which, come *from*, rise again *to* God; a love, in fine, which is not a production of nature, but a fruit of grace. It was he who, from his childhood at Nazareth until his last sigh at Golgotha, kept the standard of charity at such an elevation that it has ever been impossible to confound it with any other standard, or not perceive that the love which was spilt upon at the judgment-hall

cursed upon the way to Calvary, and crucified between two thieves, is a love different from all other kinds of love.

However, if it is in Christ Jesus that we have known what love is, it was manifested in him alone for no other purpose than that it might be diffused. If not so, to what purpose would it have been manifested? This divine love became a school. The Holy Spirit taught it to all to whom he taught that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world. They did more than announce, they reflected his virtues; and in those living mirrors, that which appeared most clearly, that which first struck all observers, was love in the Spirit. They were not of the world, as he was not of the world. Hence their affections were not of the world; or, at least, what was mortal in them was swallowed up of life. St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, thousands of others with them, and thousands of others after them, loved in the Spirit. We may recognize in them, through the veil of their humanity, this same heavenly affection distinct and entire. The life of each of them, not in virtue of any change or of any particular distinction, but simply inasmuch as they were Christians, represented it faithfully. Their life, like that of their Master, defines love in the Spirit better than words. Their love, in crossing the ocean, has left a luminous track behind, which cannot be effaced, and which will to all ages point out their passage on the road to sacrifice. Any one of them would suffice to unfold to us this new sense and new power communicated to human nature. We might confine ourselves to St. Paul; we might confine ourselves to the few lines which precede our text. Love in the Spirit is there shown in all its fulness. Every word brings out some feature; every word teaches us that St. Paul loves those to whom he writes, and loves them not according to the world, but according to the Spirit. From that time, brethren, the inheritance of the love of the Son of man was no more repudiated than the inheritance of his sor-

rows ; in other words, the people of God have always suffered, always loved. That which perpetuates itself in the living Church, in spite of all vicissitudes and all revolutions, that which, so to speak, establishes its identity from age to age, is love in the Spirit.

Facts thus combine with reason to teach us what is meant by love in the Spirit. After all that we have said, would it not be strange if we were called to prove that this love is true love, and consequently true life ? We have seen that every other affection, from the guiltiest to the most innocent, is worldly affection, and consequently transitory and perishable as the world ; all remembrance and trace of which must perish in the splendor of eternity, just as the stars of night are lost in the first rays of the sun. All I now ask is, can a true life have an end ? Has that which dies ever lived ? If we admit that whatever is true is eternal, are we not constrained to admit that whatever is not eternal is not true ? These affections were lovely, you say. Yes, we admit it ; lovely in divine beauty. But no doubt the sky also is lovely, and the earth also is lovely ; yet this will not prevent the hand which made the heavens from rolling them up like a scroll ; this will not prevent this globe, with all its magnificence and riches, from vanishing at last. Of all that is according to nature, nothing will remain ; for nature is only the form of a divine idea, whereas of that which is according to the Spirit, nothing will pass away ; for the Spirit is God himself. "Charity," saith the Apostle, "never faileth ;" but he is there speaking of love in the Spirit. We might conceive how love might preserve our forms of love, as amber preserves the patch of sea-weed around which it is formed ; but we could not conceive how this patch of sea-weed, how love, according to the world, should preserve itself.

What exposes us to illusion in this respect is, that we see

shades of resemblance where there are none ; that we suppose intermediate ties between the flesh and the Spirit, which truth disowns. The Scripture nowhere speaks of any thing which is neither Spirit nor flesh. Whatever belongs not to the Spirit, or has not been sanctified by the Spirit, is of the flesh. Not, indeed, that there is no distinction between sinful affections and purely natural affections ; but both, notwithstanding their difference, if contrasted with the affections of the Spirit, are reduced to a single class by one same character. Being of the order of nature, or of the world, and not of the order of the Spirit, they are perishable like the world. They perish with it, that is with each of us, in proportion as in regard to each of us the world perishes : so that if love in the Spirit has not entered our hearts, either to replace them or to immortalize them, there remains at our departure from this world, nothing which we can carry away. Thus, then, without here bringing together the severest denunciations of Scripture against the flesh and the things of the flesh ; without attacking the affections of the flesh, in their nature or their principle ; and without seeing in them for the moment any other character than that to which we have just pointed, namely, mortality, we apply directly to every affection which is not according to the Spirit all the declarations of the sacred Book as to the frailty of the flesh. So that when we read, "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass," we feel as if we were reading at the same time, All love which God has not sanctified by his Spirit is as grass ; and all that was graceful and lovely in it, all the charms which it shed upon our life, and with which it fascinated our imagination, is as the flower of the grass. The wind of the Almighty which blows upon the grass and the flower, may as well blow upon this love, and wither it like them. When we read that "He who soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption," the meaning we give it is, that he who

seeks life in the natural affections cruelly deceives himself; that after the enjoyment of a few years, that is, of a few instants, he will find nothing but death; and when the objects shall have been torn from him, he will find himself absolutely destitute. After this, I do not ask if God is not the true medium of true friendship; if friendships not bearing his impress can be very true or very pleasant;\* if even before the death which carries the objects naturally away, they are not exposed to a violent death; if they do not carry in them a germ of corruption, which makes them die long before us; if the best are not troubled by storms and delusions; and if even after our death we do not die in the heart of our dearest friends. Though I should have formed the most romantic and extravagant idea of the purity and constancy of their affections, I should only have added to the bitterness of this reflection, namely—There is no place in eternity for the sweetest and purest attachments, if the grace of God does not transform them from the earthly affections which they were, into spiritual and heavenly affections.

I have perhaps said enough to alarm you; for hell, a perfect hell, is in that empty heart, which has been violently dis severed from its affections, and the very remembrance of them, without being united to God; a heart which now lives only to feel that it lives not; a heart which has need of love, as the lungs have need of air and the body of food, and which finds no object to supply this want, neither the perishable beings of which it has lost the recollection, nor God whom it cannot love.

But as too few understand that hell in effect is there, it was necessary that Scripture should speak in distinct lan-

\* Sine me non valet nec durabit amicitia, nec est vera et munda dilectio quam ego non copulo. Without me no friendship is strong, or will be lasting: neither is any affection, of which I am not the bond, rue and pure.—*Imitation of Christ*.

guage, and pronounce a formal malediction against the flesh. It has accordingly done so ; and here again, all that it says against the flesh it says against purely worldly affections. Thus, when it declares that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, we understand that a heart entirely filled with earthly affections, were they free from every other fault save that of being earthly, are thereby unworthy, and incapable of heavenly happiness. And when it declares that the will of the flesh is death, instead of confining this denunciation to the impure passions which human corruption has decorated with the name of love, we extend it to all the attachments to which God has not been fully admitted, and we interpret it thus : all worldly friendship is death. Yes, death, because every affection of this description has carried off a heart from God ; a sin which deserves death, if ever any did deserve it.

We must now clearly understand that if St. Paul rejoices in the spiritual affection of the Colossians, as in a better life, it is not as in a perfection short of which there is also something good in which we might rejoice. No, he does not rejoice in the love of the Colossians as a better life, but as life ; short of this life there is only death. His joy at the state of the Colossians who love in the Spirit, supposes great sadness on account of those who are not in the same state. If he congratulates them on any thing, it is their having escaped from death. Could he then have any congratulation in reserve, though it might be less lively, for those who love not as they did ? Congratulation ! O, surely not ; but charitable warnings, earnest entreaties to love God above all, to love in him all that he permits them to love ; exhortations to place their heart at length where their only treasure is, and not deprive themselves of the only happiness which is possible after the eternal disappearance of all that here below constitutes worldly happiness. St. Paul then will not say to



them, and he says not to us, Love most what deserves most to be loved, aspire to a superior love in order to lead a superior life, let your ambition be to secure the more exquisite delights of a purer affection. No; he speaks to them, as to us, in more absolute terms. Love in the Spirit, and love in truth, are in his eyes the same thing. Where the Spirit of God is, there only is truth, and consequently life; and just as the Master had declared that God is a Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, the disciple, following out the same idea, declares in like manner that God is a Spirit, and that those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth; that they must love in spirit, in order to love in truth.

But the more absolute we perceive St. Paul to be in regard to this absolute truth, and the more inflexible as to this inflexible necessity, seeing on the one side only life, and on the other only death, the better will we understand with what feelings, with what fulness, with what exuberance of joy, he wrote to a Church, a whole Church, "I have learned"—What, brethren? That the Church extends? that it has gained over the mighty of the world? that it governs public affairs? that science makes progress in it? that men of great genius have become its defenders? Nothing of all this. He is much less taken up with the world, and much more with the view of God. "I have learned," says he, "your love in the Spirit." A Christian author has compared the joy of Paradise to the rapture of a mother's heart, when she again beholds a beloved son whom she thought dead; and he adds that the joy which soon subsides in the mother never quits the heart of the elect. The joy of St. Paul resembles that of Paradise, for this joy is that of a mother again finding the son whom she believed to be dead.

Such was the love of St. Paul for those who had been born to God by his word, and for those on whose account he

himself tells us that he travailed in birth till Christ should be formed in them. Not so much the father as the mother of his disciples, it was right, doubtless, that he should have all a mother's joys, having had all her pains; and though eighteen centuries have elapsed since he left this world, we rejoice with him when we see him forgetting all the sufferings of his long martyrdom in joy like that which a mother has when a man is born into the world. O how well entitled was he who so well knew love in the Spirit, to speak of it!

But do we, speaking after him, though too unworthily, speak of a simple accident, of an effect without a cause, of a tree without roots? You might suppose it, brethren, from our silence on the principle of this love in the Spirit; you might suppose it, if, on this subject, we did not previously understand each other. But suppose that there are among this audience individuals to whom the Gospel is unknown, what will they say after having heard us discoursing so long on love in the Spirit? They will not say, perhaps, that we have spoken of a chimera, since we have appealed to facts and mentioned names. But they will not be the better informed, or the less astonished, they will not the less ask how such a love is possible; and, in spite of all our reasonings, and all our facts, will persist in regarding both it and them as chimerical.

St. Paul did not infuse spiritual affection into the hearts of his disciples, merely by describing the beauty and proving the necessity of it. Before sowing the grain, it was necessary to open the furrow, and he had opened it. He had published at once the year of the Lord's jubilee, and the day of his vengeance. He had shown righteousness and mercy kissing each other in the ministry, the lessons, and the sufferings of the Son of God; he had made mention of the unknown God; he had announced the Father; he had made all hearts throb with joy at the sight of a reconciled God;

he had shown the God of heaven under an aspect at once so mild, that one could no longer fear without loving him, and so holy that he could no longer be loved without being feared; he had restored to the soul its natural impulse towards heaven. No longer seeing happiness on one side and duty on another, the soul was no longer necessitated to defeat one of its aims while pursuing another, but could throw itself entirely on the same side with its insatiable desires of felicity, and its inexorable longing for perfection. It found every thing on this same altar, on which it had been told that it would be necessary to forsake every thing. It could thenceforth give itself to God, give itself to him without reserve, give itself to him from the heart. It became the end of its life, the centre of its affections, the rule of its feelings, as well as of its conduct. In gradual substitution for the old, a new man was born, created in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. iv. 24. As that which is born of the flesh is flesh, so that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John iii. 6. This new man was the man of the Spirit. He loved, acted, and lived according to the Spirit. He did not feel the native ties which had united him to his brethren either broken or loosened. On the contrary, he loved them more, but loved them better. Charity, which is love in the Spirit, had come and added itself to each of his other affections. He no longer chose between his brethren and his Father, for the more he loved his Father, the more he loved his brethren; the two affections being of the same nature, and flowing from the same source. Out of him, in himself, he again found the unity which he had so long lost; and he saw, with indescribable joy, all his dearest attachments stamped by the hand of God himself with the seal of immortality.

Love in the Spirit, then, is not an unaccountable accident, an effect without a cause; neither is it an effect, the cause

of which we cannot discern, nor an effect whose cause is not in our power. This cause does not resemble a prescription or a perfume, which evaporates, and is soon found, by the mere lapse of time, to have lost its virtue. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and the Spirit of God has not grown weary of creating the faith and the virtues of the primitive Christians. He who carries our cure in his scars, has promised to be with us even to the end of the world. Truth cannot cease to be truth; can man have ceased to be man? And is that which produced such powerful and decisive impressions on the Colossians to find us impervious?

No doubt Paul is no longer there, but Christ is always there; and from the very existence of the church of the Colossians, it was not Paul but Christ who made converts. Paul did miracles, but since the days of Paul how numerous the miracles which the Colossians never saw, and which we know! How many encouragements to believe and love which they had not, but we have! Why, then, in the present day, should not the men who have succeeded Paul have the same causes of joy that Paul had? And yet, brethren, if any one of your pastors were to mount one of these pulpits and say to you, as Paul did to the Colossians, "I give thanks to God" for "your faith in Christ Jesus," and "the love which ye have to all the saints;" I have heard of "your love in the Spirit:" were he to say this to a church as a whole, including all its members, what astonishment would he not excite, and among those at least who know what is meant by charity and love in the Spirit! And how difficult would he find it to save himself from the charge of gross delusion or base flattery! He would encounter the same charge from those who are the greatest strangers to the spiritual life, however little their attention had been called, as has been done in this discourse, to the characteristics of

love in the Spirit. No, brethren; a church or society, how small soever its members may be, to which its guides are entitled to say, "You love in the Spirit; true love, that which sets out from God to diffuse itself among men, that which has God for its primary object and supreme rule, that which is humble, disinterested, independent of sense, superior to instinct, in a word, spiritual; this love reigns among you, distinguishes you as a society, characterizes you:" a church whom one might thus address is an unheard-of prodigy. Almost every church might be addressed in such terms as these: "What reigns chiefly among you is the will of the flesh, instincts good or bad, conventional arrangements, customs, not principles. Now charity is a principle. Charity as a principle, as an element of holiness, charity as a virtue, love in the Spirit, is the portion of a very small number, and even in these what difficulty does it find in surmounting the will of the flesh! You are civilized; this is most clear, and the religion of the greatest number is civilization. But between a community which should profess no other worship than sociability, and you who profess Jesus Christ come in the flesh to rescue the world from condemnation, there is no appreciable difference. Between honest people of the world, and Christians such as you are, we cannot say in which Christianity is more manifest. What they have received from Christianity in spite of themselves, you have doubtless likewise received; but what more? And by what, unless some external customs, by what, unless by certain forms, can we distinguish you from them?"

O strange difference of times, and difference of which there is no justification! When in some one of the cities of ancient times, at Rome, Ephesus, Colosse,\* some men and women had embraced the doctrine of the cross, it was like the appearance of human nature in a new form; and as the existence of humble flowers varied among the turf is indi-

cated by their perfume, so an indescribable perfume of life and eternity, an indescribable spiritual emanation powerfully drew all eyes towards this new society, which otherwise made no noise, and which, but for this pure and subtle perfume, would long have remained unknown! By what striking features was it recognized internally? By what did it force attention? By this, among other things—it loved according to the Spirit. O strange difference of places, difference of which there is no justification! When in our days the Gospel is carried to some savage horde, if they receive it they are suddenly transformed, and the most exquisite delicacies of Christian sentiment, those which we admire as literary beauties in the works of Christian genius, are substituted, so to speak, every succeeding day for those of yesterday. Spirituality keeps pace with integrity of manners. There are Marthas and there are Marys; and from the rock, scarcely cleft, the honey of Christian delight is seen to flow. Among the less advanced, hatred gives place to love; love in the Spirit supplants instinct and custom. Go and ask for such wonders in our churches, though rich in liberty and all other resources, alas! must we say it, too many resources, too much liberty! These churches are the world, with all its good and all its evil, the world under the name of the Church, the world with temples, rites, and sacred names. No longer is it said, as formerly, See how they worship, see how they pardon, see how they love! for if there was ground to say it, there would be nobody to say it, all being within the precincts, and none without. Alas! if some particular community stands out from this vast community, and exhibits some distinguishing features, what are they, and what shall we say? Shall we say, See how they love! or rather, on seeing the party-spirit which decks itself with the name of brotherly love, shall we be forced to say, See how they flatter one another? Assuredly there are

spiritual Christians, but where are spiritual communities? Where are those Colossians to whom we can say, if not to every individual, at least to the whole as a body, You walk in the Spirit, you love in the Spirit? Let others answer this question. For our part we feel forced to exclaim with the prophet, "Is the hand of the Almighty "shortened" "that it cannot redeem," has he "no power to deliver!" Is. 1. 2.

It serves little purpose to arrest, and, so to speak, imprison our eye to the contemplation of our wretchedness. Our strength, like our duty, is to hope. God wills us to believe that all is possible, that even in our antiquated world we may have the glory and strength of ancient times; God wills that with all due regret for what we have lost, we do not forget what we still have. It is no more suitable to our weakness, than accordant with his pity, to break the bruised reed, and quench the smoking flax. Let us still recognize and gather up what the wreck has left. Let us concentrate all the elements of life which are scattered in the midst of us. Let us unite our efforts, our prayers, our repentance; let us ask no longer each for himself, but each for all, our squandered patrimony. Let us ask life for the community, that life which we want, and which doubtless comes only by individuals to the community; but which is reflected from the community to individuals. Life in the Spirit, love in the Spirit, the Spirit himself, that is truth in truth itself; life in life, eternity in love, the Spirit, that is Jesus Christ within us. This we must conquer on our knees, this we must urgently beg, this energetically will.

The Spirit is the reality of our Christianity; the reality of pardon and salvation is the soul re-entering the body, God returned to his forsaken temple. So long as we find in our hearts, (I will not say hatred, although I might say it, for hatred and love, according to the world, readily meet at the same hearth,) so long as we find in our hearts only good in-

instincts, good habits, yet always instincts and habits so long as we do not distinctly recognize the Spirit in our affections, we may well say that with gentle manners, an easy character, benevolent inclinations, a delicate sensibility, a natural generosity, a disposition to tenderness, we have only a deceitful and derisory image of life, we have not life; for eternal life alone deserves the name of life, and none of those things are eternal. Give us, then, O God, spirit and life; permit us not to possess the Gospel in vain, or to remain eternally bent over the brink of this living stream without drinking; do not reduce us to a vain knowledge of the truth. Give us love, which is the whole truth, the sole truth. Chief of our faith, be its finisher; finish thy work, finish our salvation! Take us, keep us ever warm in thy paternal heart; for thou art our Father in Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved. Amen.



## THE BELIEVER COMPLETING THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

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“ And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in *my flesh*  
for his body's sake, which is the Church.” Col. i. 24.

WE fear not, brethren, to present the Apostle's thought to you under its most accurate, but, at the same time, most extraordinary form. After all, the preacher of the Gospel must give offence, and it would therefore be very strange if that which forms the characteristic of Christianity in general, I mean the unexpected and the extraordinary, should not be met with in its details. It must, however, be confessed that the surprise produced by our text, is caused by something which seems less to be derived from the principles of Christianity than to contradict and belie them. The true offence here is our not finding the primitive offence, is our not feeling, in all its bitterness, the unpalatable doctrine of the cross, is our seeing man resuming in the work of his salvation a part and a rank of which the cross of Christ seemed to have divested him once and for ever; it is, above all, our hearing it said that the work of the cross, which was presumed perfect, is however not so, that something is wanting to it, that it presents blanks which it belongs to us to supply.

It is evident, brethren, that this offence must not only be taken away, but that this passing affront to Jesus Christ must be extinguished in his brighter glory. With this view our intention is not to erase or enfeeble the words of St. Paul; but, on the contrary, to extract their meaning, and bring the Apostle's idea fully out. And it is our joy to feel that the more we press them, the more glory will redound to the Gospel.

Certainly if you consider the afflictions of Jesus Christ, whether in the dignity of him who endured them, or in themselves, or in their redeeming power, nothing can appear to have been wanting in them; and you will conclude that neither men nor angels, and, we venture to add, not even God himself can add to them.

Even had he who is holiness and innocence itself, suffered only a single one, and that the least of the afflictions to which humanity is subject, we might not have said that any thing was wanting to his afflictions, since the one affliction which he would have endured was not merited. Had he, whose abode from eternity was in the bosom of the Father, been invested with human nature only for one instant, and, if that were possible, without submitting to its humiliation and sufferings, it would have been necessary to say that Jesus Christ had suffered infinitely more than was just. If, then, he accepts our body of sin entire, even to the necessity of dying, if he chooses among all deaths that of the cross, what will we say, what terms will remain to express what is inexpressible, I mean holiness attached to an accursed tree, and God himself undergoing the punishment of the worst criminal among men?

Consider the sufferings of the Son of man in themselves. He did not suffer all that a son of man may suffer, since hatred, envy, confusion, remorse, were unknown to his holy soul; but he suffered what no son of man can suffer, at least

in the same degree, since the sight of evil could not produce the same impression on any one as on him whose eyes were too pure to look upon it, since no one has experienced or can experience such revolting injustice, or be the object of such odious ingratitude. How then would you add any thing to the sufferings of Jesus? Make him endure those of sin? That cannot be. Augment, in idea, his own peculiar sufferings? No more can this be done. There may have been bodily torture still more excruciating; but besides that we could never be sure after having indefinitely augmented them, that there might not be others more excruciating, still it is into the soul of Jesus Christ that we must look for the true passion of this God-man. And what human soul could ever have suffered what he suffered?

However, it is not from this side that we ought to approach the question; nor even is this the question. No doubt the capacity of suffering was in Jesus Christ as great as any other capacity, and in this respect also all fulness dwelt in him. No doubt he whose substitution was to outweigh all our offences, suffered with an intensity, a depth, an internal agony, beyond compare. His sufferings, like his love, are an abyss into which angels themselves vainly try to look. The question, if there still be a question, is whether in this same sphere of suffering any thing remains to be done after Jesus Christ, and if we can give a proper and literal acceptation to these words of St. Paul, "Fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church."

Let those who have the courage to do so, dispute as much as they please as to the degree in which Christ has suffered, and as to the absolute possibility of suffering more. Let them refuse as much as they please to comprehend how the affliction by which he was consecrated the Author of our salvation, must have been ineffable as his love, ineffable as

his works. We dispute not with them. Whether or not something was wanting to make the affliction of Jesus Christ the greatest of imaginable afflictions, is not the point which engages our attention. What we say, brethren, and we say it in concurrence with the whole Gospel, is, that nothing was wanting to the sufferings of Jesus Christ, in regard to the end for which they were destined. Not that the mere death of Christ accomplished our salvation. The author of our salvation is Jesus Christ as a whole, and therefore St. Paul in one of the verses preceding the text, after having said that we are saved by *the blood of the cross*, justly adds, *by him*. It is not by the mere sufferings endured between Gethsemane and Calvary, or by suffering properly so called, that Jesus Christ saves us, but by all the sufferings of his life, which constituted throughout one entire passion. For he was delivered for our offences, as soon as he opened his eyes to the pale light of our sin, and long before he was subjected to the contradiction of sinners. In bearing our body of sin, he bore his cross. It was not merely by the sufferings of his life, but by his whole life. His work forms an indivisible whole. He could not save us without suffering and dying; but he did not accomplish the work merely by suffering and death. He accomplished it by all that he was, and by all that he performed; by his actions and by his words; by what he did, and what he suffered; by his life, as by his death. But, in fine, his sufferings, and the painful death which was its last act and crown, without which he could not, according to the expression of a prophet, turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the children to the fathers, and the question which the passage of St. Paul raises is this: It being admitted that nothing was wanting to the example and instructions of Christ, both of which were necessary for the work of our salvation, was any thing wanting to his sufferings? and does his body, which is the Church,

call for a complement of affliction and pain on the part of Jesus Christ, or on the part of any other ?

No, brethren, no. All that sufferings could perform for our salvation, those of Christ performed. In this respect they are complete, and to say that ours are necessary in the same sense, would be to do more than derogate from the work of Christ, it would be to annihilate it. If there is upon the earth any other name by which, were it only in part, we can be saved, and if this name is ours, we are not absolutely lost, and Jesus Christ, who thenceforth becomes our associate, or if you will, our fellow-laborer, is no longer our Saviour. Neither the depression nor the elevation can be partial. If we are not devoid of all glory before God, we have still all our glory before God. If we have any, we have all merit. If we are not absolutely lost, we are not lost at all ; if Jesus Christ is to us any thing less than a Saviour, he is nothing. If he leaves us any thing to suffer, he himself had no cause to suffer ; for to say that our sufferings can do any thing for our redemption, is to say that they can do every thing. Man is quite ready, and he is entitled, to draw all these inferences ; and you may depend upon this, that when you have admitted him to a share, it will no longer be a share ; give him a part, and he will take all ; take part from Jesus Christ, and man will leave him nothing. But the Gospel, brethren, does not understand it so. The Gospel on this subject is as strict as absolute ; as exclusive as it is possible to be. What importance soever it attaches to our afflictions, it never attaches to them the virtue of expiating our faults, and saving us. Jesus Christ is, by his sufferings, the only, the perfect Mediator. What he came to seek and to save, was lost, not partially, but absolutely lost. It is by his stripes, and not by our own, that we are healed. It alone, and apart from us, is the propitiation for our sins, and for those of the whole world. Upon him, and not upon us,

was laid the chastisement of our peace. But why multiply quotations? The Gospel is wholly composed of them, and did our text say the contrary, it would stand solitary among a thousand which we might quote from the writings of St. Paul alone.

As there could be no error more palpable, so there could be none of sadder consequence; and there is doubtless something astonishing, though by no means inexplicable, in the eagerness with which so many persons found a title upon their sufferings. But do they know, can they know how many of those sufferings will be necessary to complete those of Jesus Christ? But can they, in sober earnest, calculate upon the virtue of their personal afflictions, and, in the remembrance of their misery, discover the smallest particle of confidence and peace? Or, if they are able to do this, will it not be shortly after to discover the internal trouble of which they thought to disencumber themselves, since how little in earnest soever they may be, they will infallibly experience a gradual decay within themselves, both of absolute confidence in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, of affection for him, and of the principle which prompts to disinterested obedience to him. I say their affection for Jesus Christ; for though he suffered neither more nor less on the one supposition than on the other, he is not their benefactor in the same degree; he is not their Saviour so absolutely, nay, he is not their Saviour at all. I add the principle of disinterested obedience, because this principle is nothing else than gratitude. But gratitude shared between Jesus Christ and themselves leads them back, step by step, towards the freezing, deadly principle of self-righteousness. A generous life must have a generous principle; and whoso believes himself to be half the author of his salvation will soon believe himself the principal, and at last the only author. This downward tendency is irresistible. Jesus Christ will now appear only in

the second place, and his sufferings will be only a fund in reserve, to which application will not be made except when better cannot be done to fill up the deficiencies which cannot but be seen, and those which possibly may not have been seen. Do we not thenceforward, or rather, do we not from the very first step in this progress, feel the deadly influence of this idea ; which, making ourselves the cause or the means of our salvation, turns aside our gratitude from its true object, and precludes the ascent of that disinterested love which is the only life of the soul ?

As to those who, annoyed, so to speak, with what is mysterious in salvation by the intervention of the Son of God, might have flattered themselves that they could make this mystery more transparent, and the yoke of faith more light, by dividing the merit of redemption between the sufferings of Christ and those of men, they would labor, you will admit, under a strange delusion. Will the knot thereby be more easily loosed, will the mystery be less impenetrable ? And what matters it, under this point of view, whether the sufferings of Christ be all, or whether they only bear a part in the excellent work to which in all cases we are indeed willing that they be applied ? Is not this part, how little soever it be, inconceivable ? Will men ever comprehend how the Holy and the Just either behooved or could have been able to suffer ? And is it not necessary, in order to remove the mystery, to remove the sufferings of Christ from every species of participation ; yes, even the least participation in the accomplishment of the designs of the Divine mercy ? There is nothing, absolutely nothing, to be gained by this division ; and if it is only a question of mystery, it is just as well to keep the mystery entire.

How then, once more, can any thing be wanting to the sufferings of Christ ? Here it is, brethren. Christ is still here below. Christ is still detained in mortal flesh. His

glorious resurrection rescued him from the power of the grave ; his glorious ascension has withdrawn him from earthly eyes ; every thing is accomplished, for what he has done is all-sufficient. But Christ is in the person of the Church, his own successor. The Church is a body whose Head is in heaven. The Church militant has inherited the condition of Christ, humbled and suffering. Here below, it represents its Divine chief as Son of man, and will represent him as such to the end of the world. It is doubtless to Jesus Christ what the body is to the head, which communicates motion to it, and determines all its acts ; but it is not less closely united to Christ Jesus than the head is to the body. It does nothing by itself, but does by him whatever it does upon the earth. It continues his work, but by him and for him. It is the whole body, but it is not the head. And while Jesus Christ, the head or chief, reigns in the peace and glory of heaven, the body, which is the Church, remaining upon the earth, suffers upon the earth all that Jesus Christ would suffer if he were still upon the earth ; for, having the same spirit, invoking his name, waging the same combat with error and sin, it must have the same enemies, encounter the same obstacles, arouse the same hostility, endure the same passion. It must endure all that, otherwise it is not the Church. The agony of Jesus Christ must continue in the person of the Church,\* otherwise there is no Church. The Head, being living, the body must live, and living upon the earth, lead an earthly life ; that is, suffer. This it is that is *wanting* or that remains to be suffered, since Jesus Christ has suffered. Here is a sign that his work is being done upon the earth ; here the flaming but glorious

\* Jesus Christ will be in agony until the end of the world ; in the meantime there must be no sleep.—*Pascal's Thoughts*. Edit. of Faugere, II. 339.



seal which the Master stamps on those who are his ; here the mean which the Church has of corresponding with its Head.

This is the proper place to observe that the term which St. Paul employs signifies not only to *finish* but also to *correspond*. It is by continuing Jesus Christ to render to him what has been received from him. Christ is the victim of the Church, and the Church is the victim of Jesus Christ. The Church, moreover, is the servant of Jesus Christ. If she did not suffer, she would not act, for she cannot act without suffering ; and if she did not act, she would not correspond to her Chief, she would not serve her Master ; who, on his part, would appear to disavow her. In all these respects there wants, and to the end of the world will want, there will be something to be added to the afflictions of Christ ; not doubtless to his personal afflictions, which are in every sense complete, but to those which he has resolved, if we may so speak, to endure to the end of the world in the persons of believers.

Do not attribute to the body any thing which belongs not to the head. Do not impute to the afflictions of the body the merit and redeeming virtue which belongs only to the sufferings of the head ; certainly not : but allow the body, which is the Church, to enter into a fellowship of love and suffering with the head, which is Jesus Christ.

It is scarcely necessary to prove to you, brethren, that all which we have just said of the Church necessarily applies to the believer ; in other words, that the believer is called to suffer like the Church. A member of a suffering Church, how should he not suffer ? And what in reality are the sufferings of the Church but the sufferings of her members ? Where can she suffer if not in her members ? And how can we conceive a sorrow of the Church of which her true members should not be partakers ? Let us not stop to prove what is evident ; let us pass on. The believer, with respect

to Jesus Christ, bears in himself all the characters of the Church. He is a complete epitome of it, so that if by a decree of God mankind were suddenly reduced to two individuals, the one a believer, the other an unbeliever, nothing would be changed but the number, and these two individuals would completely represent, in regard to Jesus Christ, the world and the Church. For if the Church, in her actual condition, is in the eye of Jesus Christ a single person whom he calls his spouse, there would in this respect be no change; there would still be a person in whom Jesus Christ would make his abode, and whom he would continue to call his spouse. The only thing which should have disappeared would be association, community; but all the rest would remain. Does that which should then be manifested, that which should then be evident, exist at present, though wrapt in obscurity? At present the believer holds the same relations with Jesus Christ as the Church; at present the believing soul, as well as the whole Church, is the spouse of Jesus Christ. And all which was imposed on the Church in her quality of Church, her whole destiny and vocation, we transfer to each Christian. We say of him, as of the Church, that he succeeds to Jesus Christ in his humiliation, and represents him upon the earth. We say of him, as of the Church, with the exception of merit and intrinsic power, that he has the same work to do as Jesus Christ. We say of him, as of the Church, that he has the same enemies to combat as his Master, and the same obstacles to surmount. We say that if the Church of which Jesus Christ became the victim is in her turn the victim of Jesus Christ, the believer is not less so. For once more this continuation, this complement of which our text speaks, is not a simple continuation, a simple complement, but a correspondence; it is human nature sacrificing itself for Jesus Christ, as Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for it; and this immolation, this perpetual

sacrifice, which is consummated at large and in a striking manner in the body of the Church, is accomplished in particular and obscurely in each of the members of which the great body is composed.

We lately made a supposition, brethren, which appeared to you extreme ; we supposed mankind reduced to two individuals, of which one should represent the Church, and the other the world : it did not seem in fact that fewer than two individuals could suffice to represent two worlds. We did not however go far enough, and we may without changing any thing essential, reduce the two individuals to one. The Church and the world will still be there, and the occasion, the subject of the combat, will not have disappeared. This man left alone after the disappearance of the human race, this man whom I suppose a Christian (for if he were not, there would be no room for the continuation of the sufferings of Christ), this man carries a world in his flesh. This man who exclaims at every moment, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ! When will that which is mortal in me be swallowed up of life !" this man is a single man only in appearance ; it is only in appearance that he is delivered from every adversary and every enemy. He has always one ; he has him under his feet, I admit ; since he is a Christian, he is always victorious ; but victory the most complete and least contested, supposes an adversary and a combat. I do not speak to you of that invisible enemy who was visible to Jesus Christ in the desert, and whose inexhaustible hatred is most bitter against the most faithful, I attend only to the world.

The world exists entire in that flesh infested by the first sin, and the impulse of which the holiest among Christians is obliged not to follow, but repress. Thus, then, in the same way as the Church in the world, this man also in his flesh continues, and on his part completes the sufferings of Christ ;

for the enemies which Jesus Christ found only around him, this man finds in himself.

We are astonished at being called to complete the sufferings of Jesus Christ, but we might at first be astonished that those whom he came to save were not immediately relieved from all suffering, and that their felicity is postponed. For, in fine, whether believers suffer to complete the sufferings of their Saviour, or suffer for any other reason, still they suffer. This we cannot deny, and cannot explain without entering fully into the thought of St. Paul. Why in fact should they suffer, if nothing were in any sense wanting to the afflictions of their Saviour? Now what evangelical wisdom teaches on this subject, is as follows:

Christ did not come to dispense by his sufferings with our sufferings, nor to dispense by his death with our death. We could not, we ought not to claim this. What are the light afflictions of the present time, if they are besides necessary for us, when compared with the eternal weight of infinitely surpassing glory? No, Christ came not to deliver us from suffering and death, but to teach us to suffer and die. He has done more than suppress suffering and death; he has rendered them useful, when they were useless. Why do I say useful? How feeble this term is! He has rendered them so precious that their preservation is, as regards the believer, one of the mercies of God. Whether or not Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, one thing is certain, namely, that without being divested of our own will, without dying to ourselves, we could not revive; being such as sin had made us, we could not attain to joy except by suffering, to life except by death. He who doubts of this, very greatly mistakes himself, and no less mistakes the laws of the moral world. Man would not be fallen, would not be separated from God, would not be incorporated with the world by his second nature, if he could without disseveration be brought

back to his ancient relations with God. Suffering and death; introduced into the world as the symbol and consequence of the fall, formed two extremes; and they were destined to contribute in the hands of Jesus Christ, but in his hands alone, to the purification of fallen man. Jesus Christ consequently, was careful not to suppress them. He seized upon this evil to convert it into a good. Impotent and unfruitful without him, suffering has become by him a germ of life. And in fact, brethren, after having accepted Jesus Christ, imagine all suffering suppressed; suppose that with Jesus Christ death itself had died; introduce the believer without transition into peace and security; were not this to take from faith all its exercise, all means of establishing and developing itself, and were it not to wish that the germ should never become a tree? How will you prove it not to be as necessary after as before the advent of Christ, for man to pass through suffering in order to arrive at joy, and through death in order to arrive at life? There could be no change of this necessity, a necessity as inviolable as the justice which nailed the Saviour to the cross; no, there could be no change in this necessity. Jesus Christ then has not abolished it, but he has given a meaning to our sufferings and our mortality, and he has made them, what they never could have been without him, a bitter dew which develops and matures in our souls the blessed germ of faith.

Those who have not accepted the hope of the Gospel do not suffer less, but they suffer uselessly and servilely, as slaves and not as children. Those, on the contrary, who hope and trust in Jesus Christ, present us with a strange and wondrous spectacle—that of weak, frail, mortal men, for whom suffering and death are no longer a necessity endured involuntarily, but in some sort an act of the will, because by consenting to those chastisements they transform them into sacrifices. The Christian does not suffer or die in spite of himself. He

wishes beforehand all that his Master wills, and thus necessity is in his case changed to liberty. He knows that he must be despoiled; hence he desires that God should assist him in despoiling himself. He knows that he must die; hence he is beforehand with death by dying daily to himself, and daily withdrawing from himself. Member of Jesus Christ, humbled and suffering, he knows that if one is dead then all are dead; that in order to be united to Jesus Christ living, it is necessary to be united to Jesus Christ dying. He therefore receives humiliation and suffering as a pledge of communion and adoption, and he has never a livelier feeling of this communion and adoption, than when he is afflicted and humbled. He understands, nay more, he sees that in proportion as the strokes of adversity fall upon him, the old man whom he ought to put to death, dies in him more and more, and he ends by discerning the meaning of those astonishing words of an Apostle, viz., that he "who has suffered in the flesh, has ceased from sin." Thus affliction and death are, in his eyes, only the natural consequence and necessary complement of the afflictions and death of Jesus Christ.

Let the path of the believer be sown with so many thorns, as to make it rougher even than that of the unbeliever, there is no room to be astonished at this. And though it should please God to smooth his path, it will always be necessary for him to find at its extremity that death which, by the confession of candid philosophers, is the bitterest of our afflictions, which, so to speak, casts its ominous shadow before, and stretches over our happiest days. "How beautiful soever all the rest of the play may be," said a Christian sage, "the last act is always bloody." Happy still, happy he whom the divine arrow often warns of the presence of the Master! And, on the other hand, how rough in its unruffled appearance, how fearful in its pleasantness, the life of the Christian whom no calamities forewarn! The effect of temporal prosperity is

to lull and blind. How difficult, while enjoying external peace, to keep awake ! What exertion is necessary to move forward on a sea whose waters have been rendered heavy as lead by a fatal calm ! And if we sleep not, if we still advance, do you know at what price ? Know you what internal combats must supply the place of those external combats which God denies us ? Know you what chastisements will be self-imposed by that soul which God seems to persist in not chastising ? Know you with how much sweat and blood this flowery path is bathed, as you pass along it ? For sufferings are necessary, in order that Christ Jesus may profit us, just as Christ Jesus is necessary in order that we may profit by suffering. And if peace arrives, if the day comes on which we can with impunity be happy, it is after the completion of the trial has not left in the believer's soul as much leaven as will leaven the mass.

Thus, dear brethren, the Church suffers ; and the Christian, wrapt up in the destiny of the Church, the Christian, subjected to the same law, suffers with the Church, and as the Church.

But St. Paul, you will perhaps remark, does not say, I suffer *with* his body, which is the Church ; he says, I suffer *for* his body, which is the Church. It is because every believer, and especially every minister, is to the Church what the Church herself is to Jesus Christ ; it is because he corresponds as member to the whole body, as the whole body corresponds to the head ; not that he himself is not in immediate relation to the head, not that the believer can only receive from the hands of the Church the nourishment which God destines for him. This fundamental error of a communion from which we are separated because of this very error, we repel with all our might as pernicious in itself, and the mother of all other errors. But it nevertheless remains true, that the believer, while remaining attached to the head, who

is Jesus Christ, resorts to the Church, and while he receives from her a thousand blessings, serves her without ceasing to be the servant of Christ. For, properly speaking, he serves him in serving the Church. What in fact is meant by serving the Church? It is to *edify* her in every sense of the term, whether in doing all we can to communicate strength and light, or in bringing new members to her, and taking part so far as God gives strength in the meetings of the saints, or as our Apostle says expressly, aiding the edification and construction of the body of Christ. Now in regard to such services, is it the Church that receives them, or is it Jesus Christ? Both the Church and Jesus Christ, he being the supreme and ultimate object. For the final result is devotedness to a Church which devotes herself to Jesus Christ. The object is to lead souls in captivity to the obedience of Christ, and therefore to aid the Church, is to aid Jesus Christ.

And here, brethren, we have to guard against two errors. The one is that any single believer cannot, except in very particular cases, serve the Church directly as the Church; the other, that the Church is served really only when she is served in the character of the Church; two opinions equally unfounded, although perhaps not equally dangerous. Nothing in the Gospel authorizes us to believe that any Christian is less entitled by birthright to watch over the interests of the Church, as such, than is the citizen of a free country to watch over the interests of the republic. The history of the finest periods of the Church abounds in examples which contradict this opinion, and confirm the principle which regards the Church as a nation of ministers and apostles. Gifts are different, abilities are unequal, but every Christian, as such, is provided with a certain measure. On the other hand, we should be greatly mistaken as to the interests of the Church, and its very nature, were we to count nothing on those indirect services which are at once within the reach of all, and



are the most important. What are those indirect services, dear brethren? Just an upright conduct, a life of divine and habitual charity. In the absence of, or rather more than all other means, it is necessary to calculate upon these. And how can we employ them, or, to say all in one word, how can we be Christians without accepting, in addition to the sufferings common to all mankind sufferings of a higher order, the pains of that spiritual birth which Christ forms in us? These pains, endured in the simple exercise of Christian virtue, are classed with those which benefit the Church. And without doubt St. Paul also had these sufferings in view, as well as contradiction and resistance from without, when he said of himself in our text, I "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church."

Yes, it is at the cost of these sufferings, general and individual, involuntary or voluntary, of body or soul, that the Church remains united to her Head; that the Church is the body of Christ. She is strengthened by all these sufferings; she draws honor from all this shame; she lives by all these deaths. This is so essential to her, that when she shall have ceased to combat and to suffer, she shall have ceased to live; unless, indeed, the whole of mankind shall have entered her bosom, and the world have become the Church. But so long as in Christendom itself (I leave the heathen out of view,) true believers will be a minority, there will be struggling and suffering. The Church has not struck her roots into the soil of this world's interests. To them, it is true, she is most useful. She serves them while they know it not; but she proceeds from the Spirit, not from the flesh; from heaven, not from the earth; from God, not from man. She does not present herself as the ally and accomplice, but as the enemy of human passions; and the first design which she announces is not to clothe, but to unclothe us. There

is enmity between her and the vices of the world, between her and the virtues of the world. The wise who are not wise with her wisdom, hate her no less than the foolish ; they hate her as if she were foolish. Ever a stranger in this world, notwithstanding her appearance, (for it is not to herself, but a phantom, that the homage of the multitude is paid,) she is incessantly obliged to fight for the place which she occupies. She lives, if we dare say so, not on a certain income, but on the booty which she seizes from day to day. She is not established in the world, but encamped ; her existence is always a question ; and while every man coming into the world belongs to society, no man belongs beforehand to the Church. She has no citizens but those whom she snatches from the world. Scarcely can it be said that she lives. Her life is a perpetual resurrection. She is incessantly coming forth from the tomb. By means of truth, and consequent congruity with the nature of things and the nature of man, she has compelled modern nations to adopt several of her maxims, giving them a new civilization, and even her name. The nations who call themselves Christian really form a single nation when contrasted with those who are not so named ; and the time, perhaps, is not distant when in a certain sense the whole world will be Christian ; but even then it will not be the fundamental principles but the secondary ideas, the application of Christianity, which the world will have adopted. It is not the world that will give a firm hold to the roots of the tree whose fruits the world is very well pleased to gather. These roots (I mean the truths which lie at the foundation of the faith of the Church,) will be not less contrary and hateful to the natural man than before ; and so long as this natural man, of whom the Christian ever feels the remains within himself, shall form a majority in the world, it is clear that the Church will behoove to combat, to struggle for her life, and consequently suffer as her Captain *has suffered*.

What idea do they form of the condition of the Church ? What understanding have they of its principles ? How do they represent the relations of the body with the Head, and the members with the body—they, I mean, who of their own sovereign authority banish to the first times of Christianity, as a kind of heroic and almost fabulous age, every thing in Christianity and the profession of it which is of a tragical nature ? Would they, (since, in short, there is no other alternative,) would they say that Christianity commenced with tragedy, and continues with comedy ? For, alas ! would not Christianity be indeed a dull comedy, if, from unwillingness to continue Jesus Christ in his sufferings, it should be unwilling to continue him in his virtues, and refuse to understand how in the present day, as at all times, to be a Christian is to do like Simon the Cyrenian, to share with Jesus Christ in bearing the burden of the cross ? Not to know this were to know less of Christianity than was known respecting human life by those sages of all times who have declared that life is a combat. And, in fact, it is only to the man who is absolutely sold to the flesh that life is not a combat. All life which seeks its principle somewhere else than in material interests must be a combat. And what is Christianity but life, properly so called, and therefore combat in the highest sense ; combat, with all its importance and all its dangers, all its agonies, all its inveteracy, all its bloody horror ? Let us speak frankly. You are Christians only in so far as your Christianity is all that I have said ; only in so far as you can say with some truth like St. Paul, though in different circumstances, I “ fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the Church.”

It is with this, brethren, that I conclude ; for my object has not been merely to explain the meaning of St. Paul’s words, and remove the offence which a first view of them

might occasion. If you have understood that in one sense nothing is wanting to the afflictions of Christ, and that in another sense something will always be wanting ; that there will always be a residue to suffer until the end of the ages which are reserved to the Church and to mankind ; if you have understood that the Church is nothing else than the Man of sorrows, perpetuated in the persons of those who are united to him, you must distinctly ask yourselves if, like St. Paul, you fill up in your flesh for the Church of Jesus Christ the residue of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. For I cannot suppose you so little acquainted with your own religion as to come forward and say, St. Paul was an apostle, and I am not so ; St. Paul, was set apart, and I have been left in the mass. In what mass, pray ? Has not that mass itself been set apart ? Is not that mass the Church ? Is not the Church a society of apostles ? Are there some in her bosom who have only the privilege of suffering for her ? Is any one excluded ? Is it not the duty and the privilege of all to fight and die for her, were it only in that hidden and rancorous struggle between the spirit and the flesh, the regenerated and the corrupt will ? No, no ; you have all been set apart, and in consequence every one of you ought to ask himself, What have I voluntarily suffered for Jesus Christ, and for his body, which is the Church ? What battles have I fought for the Head and for the body ? With what bloody remains of that old man whom I must put to death have I impurpled my path through life ?

If this view of Christianity appears at the first glance melancholy and frightful, have you not within you the means of combating this natural impression ? Ah ! if the objection seems to you unanswerable, you have not learned the first elements of the religion which you profess, and you do not possess Jesus Christ in any manner. If you loved Jesus Christ, the objection, supposing it ever could have been

raised, would fall of its own accord. If you do not love him, the objection subsists, and we cannot answer it. For with this love you will perceive that these sufferings are at once a necessity, a blessing, a glory; and without love you will perceive nothing of the kind. With love you will perceive that blood and life are sacrificed for the Church in the same way as the love of country has perhaps made you understand how all things are joyously abandoned for the safety of the Commonwealth; but without love you cannot understand it. With love you will look forward and see all these afflictions transferred into joy, because in proportion as the outward man decays, the inward man is revived in proportion also; as outward happiness diminishes, internal happiness is strengthened and increased at the same moment, sending down its roots, and throwing forth its branches. Without love all this seems to you chimerical. With love you will find that God still leaves you a remnant of happiness, and that all things rightly considered, godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. Without love the largest portion of the goods of this life which God might give you, would seem small and niggardly. The whole is to love: if you love you will comprehend; if you love, you will say with St. Paul, "I rejoice in my sufferings." And have you not, over and above all this, the ineffable consolations which love imparts, the prospect of that repose, that heavenly glory, the sure promise of which is the very root of your love?

The Church has need of your sufferings, because it has need of your services. The Church is not more than supplied by all her children, and by all their love. You must see with what painful effort she is struggling against enemies, both from without and from within. You must see with what bitter tears and bloody sweat, she bathes her Gethsemane. You have heard the sound of the lash that

is scourging her, and the derisive cries of the men who, after blindfolding her, (for in the present day she scarcely knows her friends from her foes,) insultingly exclaim, "Prophecy who struck thee." You perhaps hear not the ancient shout, "Away, away! crucify!" In certain places she has her crucifixion in the contempt, the disdainful tolerance of some, and the insulting homage of others. In other places, far from being nailed upon a cross, she is upon a throne; but go near, examine closely, and you will see that she is chained. Under all forms, that of respect included, she undergoes her irrevocable destiny. Did your eyes present her to you tranquil, honored, consolidated in public institutions, the danger would only be the greater, and your zeal the more necessary; you would have less cause to fear for her if she was crying aloud for help. Say not then within yourselves, Let us employ this momentary time in taking a little repose. There is no time for repose, and there never will be; you will repose in heaven. Alternately, or rather at the same moment, the Church attacks and defends. The Church advances to her frontiers to protect, and then goes forward to conquer. Go with her wherever she goes. Fortify her on the ground which she occupies, add new provinces to her empire; unite with her in fulfilling the command which she received from Jesus Christ, to preach the Gospel to every creature. Architects of the divine mansion, builders of another Jerusalem! take the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other; destroy error, propagate truth; above all, diffuse the perfume, the life-giving odor of the Gospel, by a pure, holy life; a life honorable in the sight of God and man, full of charity and good works, to the glory of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## PHILOSOPHY AND TRADITION.

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"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."—COL. ii. 8.

ST. PAUL, in the verses preceding our text, has celebrated the mystery of the threefold fulness of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely, fulness as God, fulness as Saviour, and fulness of communion through faith with the soul of the Christian ; and he concludes with saying that in this mystery of the fulness of Jesus Christ are contained all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

St. Paul, in these last words, throws down the gauntlet to human wisdom, which insists on owing all to itself, and nothing, or the least possible, to the great mystery of the Gospel. He bids defiance to the heresy which had for some time been endeavoring to undermine the doctrine of Paul, as delivered by Epaphras to the Church at Colosse. Or rather (as these terms, *gauntlet* and *defiance*, are too little accordant with St. Paul's humility), he protests, in the name of truth, against all those who, at Colosse, or elsewhere, presumed to

know of something superior to the mystery of Christ and the fulness of Christ.

Here, brethren, the ruling passion of St. Paul is revealed ; here we perceive that his mind is occupied not with the interest of an idea, but a more affecting interest, that of souls. Here the joy of having seen this great mystery announced to the world, of being himself the bearer of it among all nations, gives place for a moment to a lively and tender solicitude. One would say that joy has awakened fear, and that the more St. Paul appreciates the glory, beauty, and value of this mystery, the more he becomes alive to the pang he should feel in seeing the believers of Colosse deprived of it, and regrets that he does not possess all imaginable means of confirming them in the faith which they had embraced.

One very important mean is wanting to him, that of being in the midst of them, so as to speak, instead of being obliged to write to them. How feeble is a letter, however eloquent, in comparison with actual converse, which, being prolonged or renewed, gives to mere thought the inexplicable force derived from the living voice, the look, the personal presence, enabling the listener to question the speaker, and by questions guide his address, so as more effectually to meet the wants of the occasion. And even though the writer should be weighty and eloquent only when he writes, though his speech, to use St. Paul's words, should be contemptible, has he not the means of giving power to this contemptible, and eloquence to this mute presence ? Has not action a language ? Are there no arguments in example ? St. Paul, it would seem, did not plume himself on being a great orator ; and when, with touching humility, he repeats the remarks of his opponents, who said of him, " His letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible," he does not childishly undertake the defence of his despised elo-



quence, perhaps unjustly despised ; he simply answers, " Let such an one think this, that such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in *deed* when we are present." 2 Cor. x. 10, 11.

I need not remind you, brethren, of the *deeds* of St. Paul, his energy, his decision, the wisdom of his measures, his ability, if one is permitted so to speak, in the government of the Church ; in fine, his zeal, ardent though meek, for the welfare of his disciples. In the danger with which he saw the faith of the Colossians threatened, he might well deplore his captivity, which prevented him from going to their assistance. But did he not thereby do injustice to his letters, which even his enemies allowed to be powerful and weighty ? Are they not the very letters which, transmitted by the first believers to their neighbors, and through them to their descendants from age to age, and from country to country, have converted the world ? Are not we ourselves the living proof ; we who, after so many generations gone by, still assemble, like the primitive converts, to read and meditate on the writings of Paul ? And yet, brethren, Paul was right, and the immense success of his epistles proves that the regret which he here expresses was not unfounded. It was not by his epistles alone that the world was converted, but by the men who have, in a sense, unceasingly addressed them anew to the whole Church, by the men who have *spoken* what St. Paul had *written*, and by their conduct and personal example confirmed the truths contained in these immortal writings. We may say literally (at least when including the whole body of believers) that " faith cometh by hearing," and not by reading merely ; and that if in some way which it may not be easy to conceive, the first messengers of the Gospel had confined themselves to the circulation of the epistles of St. Paul and the whole Bible throughout the world, without mingling their spoken with this written word ; and if those whom this reading had converted

(for we admit that it might have converted many) had thereafter in like manner interdicted themselves from preaching otherwise than by this silent communication of the sacred volume, the flame kindled for an instant would soon have grown feeble, and ere long have been extinguished. Such, generally, is the importance of personal presence and oral communication ; so closely has God connected the agency and gifts of the Spirit that quickeneth, with the influence which is derived from direct intercourse between man and man.

Not being able to transport himself to the Colossians and appear to them as a living epistle of Jesus Christ, St. Paul seeks to supply the want by the earnestness and heartfelt warmth of what he writes. He, so to speak, does all he can to make himself present by the power of his love ; the impulses of his heart annihilate space ; he brings the Colossians near to him by the very expression of his regret ; he draws them to his bosom and embraces them by thoughts full of tenderness ; he is determined not to be absent, and says he is with them in spirit. He has not only heard of the imposing order, the battle array, (for this seems to be the idea,) which the Colossians oppose to the enemy of their faith, he sees all this, and rejoices at it. He is at their head, or rather in their ranks ; and, if they here engage in a struggle or combat, he, an invisible companion in arms, toils and combats by their side.

How deep must be the vexation of a patriot warrior not to be able to take part in a battle which is to decide the fate of his country ! While the Israelites were fighting, Moses was far off on the mountain ; but there he fought along with them. St. Paul knows the secret of being present every where. It is not his fault if the Colossians do not perceive his presence in the midst of them. He is there in effect, he is fully there by love ; and not from a distance, but close at

hand he cries to them, "'This I say lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.' Col. ii. 4. I hear the words, I see the deceivers, I feel the danger. Soldiers of Jesus Christ, whose goodly order and compact phalanx I admire, Be on your guard, yonder is the enemy!"

The enemy of whom St. Paul speaks is the great enemy, the enemy of Jesus Christ, the enemy of souls; in other words, the world and the prince of this world.

The aim, the constant effort of that enemy, is to destroy Jesus Christ in order that he may escape being destroyed; for not only is there no fellowship, there is no compatibility between Christ and Belial. The impious, the insensate war which the spirit of the world has declared against Christ is a war of death, though the world cares not fully to announce the fact. It is not always good policy to take up the position of open hostility to Jesus Christ. Although his true friends have not, in any age or country formed the majority, there is in all the countries of Christendom a prejudice in favor of Jesus Christ; or, shall I call it, a species of faith which, though it is not true faith, and does not imply love, fails not to produce dismay at the first rumor and the mere idea of waging mortal war against him. There is a general confused feeling that Jesus Christ is required; and that in a world without him there would (one knows not how, but the thing is certain) be a great and dreadful blank. Thought has its knights-errant as it has its heroes, and never, perhaps, were they more numerous than in the present day. Have you observed, however, that they dare not while attacking Christianity by argument to separate themselves absolutely from it, and that the war which they wage against Jesus Christ is waged in his own name? The sneering infidelity of the last century is no longer in season. Christianity, it is true, is merely a phantom, a vain name; but it is necessary to keep terms with this name, this phantom. Not only in

the present day, but at all times, have the enemies of Jesus Christ found it a more profitable attempt to disparage than to annihilate it. The former seems less outrageous than the other, and this is a great point. It gives no umbrage at all to the greater number; and provided there is no talk of destroying Jesus Christ, provided there is no absolute denial of him, they may curtail, and exterminate, and reduce him to a mere name, without giving any offence to the multitude to whom the name of Jesus Christ, and the name alone, suffices. The effect meanwhile will be not only to disparage, but to destroy him. Jesus Christ cannot be either degraded or aggrandized. To lessen is to annihilate him; and if he is only part God or part Saviour, if he only communicates himself to us in part, or his communion is only partly certain, he is neither God nor Saviour; in short, he is not in us the hope of glory in any degree or any manner.

It is true, that a man who believes more in Jesus Christ than he is aware, may detract from him in word without detracting in his heart; but the inflexible law which declares that Jesus Christ is annihilated when he is lessened—the law which, though it seems to fail in particular instances never actually does so, is clearly exemplified in the multitude. Jesus Christ and the fulness of Jesus Christ are one and the same mystery, one and the same truth; and wherever Jesus Christ has been robbed of a single ray of his glory, the disappearance of this single ray produces a complete obscurity, from the bosom of which you, as it were, hear humanity exclaiming in accents of grief, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him!”

What joy must it give to the enemy of our salvation to have discovered a method of making war on Jesus Christ without exciting suspicion, and even while appearing to do him homage! It is, however, very easy to see why he has at all times preferred *heresy* which disparages Jesus Christ,

to *infidelity* which denies him. I say, brethren, heresy which disparages Jesus Christ, because, notwithstanding the infinite diversity of forms and creeds, all heresies have this tendency; all without exception go to disparage Jesus Christ. What else, pray, could they do since they cannot magnify him? And be not deceived. The heresies spring not from without, except to this extent, that the prince of error awakens them in our heart. They have their germ there. The human heart is the great heresiarch; and just as it has been said that there is no temptation which is not human, there is no error which is not human. An angel of darkness comes, and with his hand stirs the pool; but the pool was previously in our heart. We are thus the chief accomplices of our enemy, his chief auxiliaries, unless it be deemed more correct to say that he is the chief accomplice, the chief auxiliary of a heart always ready for rebellion. For the great interest, the ruling passion of the human heart before the truth has entirely vanquished it, is to reduce Jesus Christ to a mere name. Doing the very opposite of John the Baptist, who felt such joy in saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease;" our heart, even after confessing Jesus Christ, is continually whispering, "Let it be our utmost endeavor that he may decrease and we increase."

But be this as it may; whether the initiative belong to our heart, or to the great adversary, the fact of being accomplices is not avowed by either. Neither our heart with its passions, nor the adversary with his malice, appears openly in the arena. They do not measure weapons with the great mystery of godliness—the Gospel. They send in their place other adversaries seemingly disinterested, and free (at least they pretend so,) from any other interest than that of truth, and it is in their name that the battle is waged. Of such enemies are two with candid look, unruffled brow, and venerable mien, and bearing on their shield the sacred

names of truth and duty. The one of these enemies, St. Paul calls *philosophy*, the other *tradition*. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men;" or rather by a philosophy full of vain impostures, and by human tradition. Such are the auxiliaries of the world in this impious war; adversaries which in a great measure owe their strength to our passions, and without which our passions would not be very strong. For on the one hand, no one is willing, in total disregard of appearances, to give himself up to evil; and on the other hand it would be difficult to find arguments for evil, if we were not strongly predisposed to find them. Thus alternately we aid them, and they aid us; we receive their inspirations, and they receive ours; they are our auxiliaries, and we become theirs; and their efforts united to ours, are directed to a common end, namely, to weaken Jesus Christ, to derogate from his fulness, to persuade ourselves that the mystery of this fulness does not, as St. Paul affirms, contain all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in other words, that this mystery is not perfectly wise, is not perfectly true.

Philosophy, brethren, taken in its simplest acceptation, is only a higher degree of good sense, which, not pretending to know all things, desires to have a thorough knowledge of those objects, the knowledge of which has been placed within our reach. It sets no value on names and appearances; prejudice is not the basis of any of its judgments; neither number nor time has the effect of transforming error into truth. It believes not, denies not, affirms not, at hazard, or on slight grounds. Not trusting to a first look, it searches for differences under resemblances, and resemblances under differences; alternately uniting what the vulgar separate, and separating what they unite. While all facts are isolated to the inattentive eye, they are connected and linked together by the eye of philosophy, which does what it can to trace

the chain which unites them. In every case fixing on what is essential, and throwing aside what is merely accidental, it comes at last to recognize a common nature, a common principle, a common origin, in objects which seemed at first to have nothing in common. It thus reduces the innumerable facts of the moral and physical world to a small number of ideas, and these to a smaller number still, always gravitating towards the unity which it will never reach, but to which a mysterious power constrains it always to aspire. To say all in one word, philosophy differs from vulgar reason, in applying itself to penetrate from the exterior of things or their envelope, to their principle, or at least to the idea which explains the greatest number of possible facts, and before which it is constrained to stop as if out of breath. When shall it stop? What is its legitimate sphere? This question is of more importance than any other. Philosophy does not gain more honor by extending its search, than by recognizing its limits. It reigns in this apparent dethronement. It is its glory to know how to restrict itself, just as in the domain of morality it is the glory of the will to stop in proper time and make an effort upon itself. But in order to know what it is able and what unable to do, it takes account of its processes and instruments, compares its means with its end, and not being able to place all its greatness in knowledge finds part of it in confessing its ignorance, and so to speak, in knowing certainly that it does not know.

St. Paul did not repudiate this philosophy, and could have no intention to repudiate it. He knew as well as we, that in matters of religion, and even of revealed religion, there may be either a good or a bad philosophy, but that at all events there is philosophy. We cannot condemn philosophy without condemning ourselves to silence on the subject of religion which presupposes it, and guides it, and would create it if it did not previously exist. Accordingly,

St. Paul has not condemned it ; and when he warns his disciples against a science " falsely so called," his words imply the existence of a science that is true. Now philosophy is a part of science, or rather is itself the science of science. Nor, moreover, could he have condemned it, without condemning himself who has made such happy and frequent use of it. It were vain to deny that the writings of St. Paul and of St. John are full of the highest philosophy. Let us be understood. We do not say full of sublime truth, but of that philosophy which we have endeavored to characterize, which rises from appearances to reality, from accident to essence, from the particular to the general, from variable facts to immutable principles.

No more did St. Paul despise tradition, by which must be understood the communication of a fact or a truth by a person entitled to credit. Philosophy teaches us on what ground a person is entitled to be believed, but the conditions which she prescribes being fulfilled, it is philosophical to believe. Then tradition comes at the bidding of philosophy to fill up the void left by philosophy, which, however she may reason upon facts, cannot invent them. Revelation in this sense is tradition in its highest form, the tradition of God himself. But the succession of holy lives in the history of human nature, is also the tradition of God, or divine tradition. These lives are Christianity itself. For Christianity, though it flows from doctrine and be written in a book, is not essentially either a doctrine or a book, but a life springing up eternally from the very bosom of God. In this life, perpetuated from believer to believer, is a revelation, a tradition, a divine testimony. The perfect sameness of Christianity, continued through all the extreme diversities of time and places, is also a divine tradition ; and the philosopher himself, struck with this marvellous agreement of ages, nations, and races, cannot avoid seeing in this intimate and



involuntary agreement between the savage and civilized man, between the Christians of the first century and those of the nineteenth, a fact which ought to have great weight in favor of the Christian religion. In another sense still, tradition is of importance; namely, when going back to the very sources of our belief, it shows them to us in a state of purity and simplicity, which they quickly lost in the discourses and writings of succeeding ages. For although the diamond of truth is always pure in itself, and although the moment the outer covering is removed it sparkles as at first, still this covering, this crust, must be taken away; so that it may be, as in the hands of the Master and his immediate disciples, with nothing to envelope, nothing to tarnish it, but pure diamond throughout. It is to this return towards our original sources that the words of the prophet apply: "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." Jer. vi. 16.

It is neither against this tradition nor this philosophy that St. Paul wishes to guard the Colossians. He speaks of a vain philosophy, and a human tradition. The former is natural reason proceeding without rule, and working on incomplete or false data; the latter is stupid prejudice, which, in estimating any opinion, throws in the dead weights of number and time. St. Paul wishes to guard the Colossians, and us also, against sophistry in the garb of philosophy, and against custom claiming the authority of proof.

He calls this philosophy vain, or full of imposture. Thus, brethren, we think the original ought to be rendered, and it is in fact by imposture or appearances that this philosophy deceives us. It does not lay down any thing as a principle which we do not admit, and admit willingly. The truth which it wishes to destroy, it opposes by truths, but partial truths, which, being separated from those which were designed to complete them, become thereby grave errors. The

world acts in regard to the truth as it does in regard to Jesus Christ. It does not deny it absolutely, it detracts from it. This is its imposture. It is by this that it dazzles the greater part of men, especially those who are willing to be dazzled. Accordingly, it requires not to evoke phantoms, and create, if we may so speak, factitious errors. Truth is sufficient. It breaks it down into fragments, and out of one of them forms an error, an error all the more dangerous from its resemblance to truth. Its falsehoods are fractional parts of truth, and would be far less dangerous, or absolutely without danger, if they were mere falsehoods.

It is thus, for example, that it appeals to common sense, a kind of mole whose eye sees well what it does see, but sees only at the distance of a yard or two, and then sneeringly asks on what part of the horizon are situated the wonderful objects which others have pretended to see, but which in truth they have only dreamed. It takes care not to let out that this weak eye, if provided with a telescope, would see all that others have seen. It accustoms it to judge of the things of heaven by the analogies of the earth, teaching it to consider nothing real that it does not touch, and nothing true that it does not comprehend. It does not bid it deny the existence of what is invisible or infinite, of providence, or grace, or intercourse with God by prayer; but it whispers away all these truths, because none of them lie within the reach of common sense, which, if interrogated as to each, would answer, No! Do you see that man who was employed to kindle a blazing beacon on the top of a tower, to guide the unhappy mariner amid storm and darkness to the haven, and instead of doing so, is, as if in mockery, substituting the little lamp which lately glimmered in a corner of his narrow dwelling? Such is the philosophy of common sense. Must not a man have fallen very low, must not his soul be smothered or quite dead, before he can seriously apply the narrow principles of com-

mon sense to religious questions? Well! a whole age may come to this, (we have seen it,) and what does Jesus Christ become for such an age? We have seen this also. Some deny him and blaspheme; others, more timid, or less consistent, or more skilful, disparage him, detract from his fulness. For the latter, as for the former, Jesus Christ no longer exists, for Jesus Christ is not in accordance with this common sense.

Another delusion, of an entirely opposite description, separating us from common sense, (which, though we ought not to rest satisfied with it, we ought never to abandon,) carries us away into boundless regions where nothing arrests the eye, where nothing can be compared or measured, because there is nothing in this space but space itself—where ideas do not represent things, nor words, ideas—where the existence of the thinking being is confounded with that of the subject of thought—where the last point to support or fix thought, the certainty of our own existence, the right of saying *I*, has begun by losing itself in a substance which is no more capable than ourselves of saying *I*. To persuade the mind that thus to beat about *in vacuo* is really to think, that to connect *formula* with *formula* is really to know, is not so difficult as one might be led to believe, or as the philosophy of common sense would have it to be believed. And when sacrifice has been offered to this idol, which is larger but more hollow than the other, what remains of Jesus Christ? His name, perhaps. For those systems which plume themselves on being vast enough to take all systems into their embrace, have one also for Jesus Christ.

But what is this place? or rather, what is this Jesus Christ? Do you expect to meet the Jesus Christ of Bethlehem or Calvary, the living, personified Jesus Christ, who wept over Lazarus, looked round on Peter, and loved St. John? How poor! how mean your conceptions! The cross itself is only a symbol, of whose meaning you have no proper idea!

And as for the eternal *Són* in uniting his divinity to our humanity—and as for our Advocate who stands beside the Father, and lives continually interceding for us—and as for that heavenly Friend who is in the midst of us when we meet in his name—we must no longer think of them. Jesus Christ is not a person, but a fact. The person who appeared under the name of Jesus Christ, did no more than give a visible shape at that particular moment to an idea previously existing in the world. It was this idea that was crucified, rose again, and ascended to heaven. There is no other Jesus Christ. Yours, he at whose feet you have prayed so much, suffered so much, loved so much, was several persons, none of whom was Christ, or thought he was; but one of whom has appropriated to himself all that the others have been, and merged their memory in his own. Go now, pray and weep on this deserted Calvary; seek there for a cross which was never erected; seek in the heavens for a Christ who is not there, and instead of a God adore a system: Your Christ has been lost in a much greater Christ. Go not then to say that he has been lessened to you; on the contrary, he has been aggrandized. No, brethren; say boldly that he has been lessened to you, lessened to the extent of all his personality, which was the support of your hope, the principle of your religious life, and the charm of your pains!

The philosophy of which St. Paul speaks, has other delusions in store. Always faithful to its principle, it lessens man in order to lessen Jesus Christ. It designedly forgets some one or other of the principal elements of human nature, and so effectually, that man being no longer the entire being he was, no longer needs an entire Jesus Christ. Sometimes it makes religion an argument, a system, all the parts of which it skilfully balances; and so completely does it absorb all the parts of our intellect in the study of it, that what it gave to us for a system remains in effect nothing but a

system, so that we think our religion without feeling it, reason of love without loving, and of salvation without being saved; in one word, know, to a wondrous nicety, how all these things ought to take place in us, while none actually does take place. Sometimes at a single stroke it lops off one of the doctrines of the Gospel, and one of the wants of our nature; for there is not a doctrine in the Gospel but corresponds to one of our wants, nor in our nature a want which does not correspond to a doctrine of the Gospel. It will be satisfied, for example, I do not say with our denying, but with our dissembling, our being silent both as to this want of our nature and those words of the Gospel which unite in exhibiting perfection both as the limit of our exertions and the end of our lives. Hence, I mean from a morality without heroism, to a trivial morality, there is not even a single step; we pass without transition from the one to the other. We are trivial when we are not sublime. And if viewed from the cross of the God-man a vulgar morality is absurd, the cross of the God-man is equally absurd when viewed from a vulgar morality. What have we to do with Jesus Christ, and how superfluous must his cross be, the moment it is understood that we are not called to perfection? Jesus Christ is then degraded. How far? I know not; but what you ought to know is, that if Jesus Christ is no longer necessary, he is no longer even useful to you.

There is another deception, another truth transformed into error. Philosophy invokes the idea of progress; and as this idea is profoundly true, as progress, in whatever way we understand it, is the instinct of every man, it readily finds an echo in our heart. To give the whole truth, it would be necessary to tell man that immutability like progress is the characteristic and the beauty of true religion, the work of a God in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, and that St. Paul has said of his Master

with perfect truth, that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever: it would be necessary to tell him that this immutability which forms the glory of the Gospel, (since, while remaining the same, it has sufficed for all ages, and supplied all the wants to which progress has given birth,) is at the same time, and above all, the consolation and joy of the believer who no longer fears that he will be carried about with every wind of doctrine: it would be necessary to tell him that without this immutability the Gospel, which would be to him only a human idea, continually modifying itself, would not be sufficient for him either in life or in death: in fine, it would be necessary to tell him that the progress which he loves and desires is found in the Gospel, which, without admitting any change on its eternal foundation, adapts itself to all the most diversified movements of human nature, dilates with it, so to speak, and, after each revolution of society, shows itself adapted to the state which produced the revolution; what do I say? carries in its bosom the germ of all happy revolutions, and has instigated or paved the way for all. Yes, it would be necessary to tell all this. But, by not telling it, we produce in man a feeling of impatience against this immovable religion which seems to keep lagging behind his thoughts and his hopes. Thus then Christ Jesus is diminished by taking from him, if I dare so speak, a part of his humanity, since, in his character of man, he should subscribe and give his concurrence to all developments and to all true progress.

Such are some of the stratagems of a false philosophy. Here many others might be mentioned! Let us be contented with having put you on the way of detecting them; and let us now with St. Paul attend to the other accomplice or ally of the world, *human tradition*. Must not the world be very determined to succeed, and at the same time very dubious of success, when it associates in one same design two such

declared enemies to each other as philosophy and tradition ? I mean delusive philosophy, and human tradition. Philosophy styles itself the independence, the sovereignty of the human mind, and tradition is in its eyes servitude and degradation ; but they are aware, it would seem, that their united force is not too much to insure success to the mighty task of rooting up this great tree, or even lopping its branches. Hence they easily overcome their mutual repugnance ; philosophy willingly leans upon tradition, and tradition willingly defers to philosophy. I mean that philosophy disdains not to enter into the prejudices of the multitude, and the multitude refuse not to borrow some arguments from philosophy. At Colosse heresy had this double character : it was a compound of subtle reasonings and unauthorized traditions ; and the fulness of Jesus Christ was charged with being at once contrary to a pretended nature of things, and to the opinions of the doctors.

The effect of tradition in this discussion was directed not so much against the divine nature of Jesus Christ, as against the all-sufficient and perfect virtue of his work as Redeemer. Tradition labored to bring back the Colossians towards the law, not certainly towards that spiritual law, which, like a sage preceptor, would have brought them to Jesus Christ, but towards that law of works and observances which was far more fitted than any other thing to replace the idol of self-righteousness upon its pedestal. We have not the same traditions, brethren ; perhaps we have none, unless it be in some sort one to have none, and to be able to say, What is proposed for our belief our fathers did not believe ; what is proposed for our belief is not believed elsewhere. This negative tradition of unbelief and indifference is assuredly not less powerful than the other ; and we know how, to the disgrace of many, advantage has been taken of it to impair the Gospel and lessen Jesus Christ. We may indeed derive from tradition quite an opposite result. This also has been

seen, and, up to a certain point, we may rejoice in it ; but, since it is necessary here to speak the whole truth, we would not be astonished should the great enemy rejoice to see human tradition, even in the direction of truth, substituted for the testimony of God, and men continuing or beginning to believe in Jesus Christ, not because they have recognized in him the way, the truth, and the life ; not because in beholding him they have been internally constrained to render glory to him ; but principally because their fathers believed in him. It is a snare which the prince of darkness lays for the most faithful. Perhaps he would prefer that the name of Jesus Christ should not be pronounced at all, this name alone being a power ; but, after all, it does not matter very much to him whether faith have this object or that, provided that, reduced to a lifeless form, it have nothing more of faith but the form and the name, and Jesus Christ be lessened or restricted, if not in the plenitude of his nature or of his work, at least in our heart, and in the homage which we owe to him. Thus, at all times, whatever be the purport of the tradition, the enemy employs it to the prejudice of Jesus Christ, or much rather to our prejudice ; and the exhortation of the apostle, coming to us across eighteen intervening centuries, has lost none of its truth or its seasonableness.

And let us not forget that in the Church of Colosse, these two adversaries both laid claim to Jesus Christ : they dared to pronounce his name, and even set themselves up as heralds of his glory, and preachers of his doctrine. It is necessary to remember this, in order to comprehend St. Paul's declaration to the Colossians, that their new teachers taught them " according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ." Would it have been worth his while to say, that these teachers did not teach according to Christ, if they had not pretended to preach according to Christ ? No ; but, so far were they from teaching according to Christ, that they at-



tacked the fulness of Christ, a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel; and moreover did not teach (this is clear without mentioning it,) according to the Spirit of Christ, which is heavenly, but, says St. Paul, according to the elements of the world. It was the world in fact, the world which has a divided heart, the world which aspires not to perfection, the world which is contented with an insipid, middle course; the world which neither hungers nor thirsts after righteousness, the world to which all that is divine in human life appears folly. It was the world which furnished these teachers with the materials of their arguments, arguments always sufficiently specious to the natural man. Setting out from the world, they arrived at the world: it is necessary to set out from God, to arrive at God. They were self-condemned in their efforts to lessen Jesus Christ; for whatever might be their design, they had not announced that it was to lessen the obligations of man, to lower his destiny, to lower his nature, to lower religion. They would have been very sorry that this should have been thought, they would have protested against the charge. They deserved it, however, and could not but deserve it; for it is an eternal law, confirmed by the experience of all ages, that we cannot detract from the fulness of Christ, without detracting to the same extent from the perfection of the Christian law; and, in like manner, that we cannot try to curtail this perfect law, without feeling imperiously urged to depose Jesus Christ from the throne on which our faith had placed him.

Strange, yet true! the tradition of the truth has sometimes conveyed the tradition of falsehood. Under the shelter of an important doctrine, clearly evinced and loftily proclaimed, and presiding over all other doctrine, a train of human inventions calculated for the consolation of the natural man have embodied themselves and swelled the current of tradition. In this unhallowed train there is no error which

has not found a place, there is no gross superstition, no degrading idolatry, no shameful paganism, which has not walked with head erect, proud at being seen in the company of a truth universally honored. Thus the national flag is sometimes seen floating over the vessel of the pirate. He who, yielding too much to time, space, and custom, does not constantly go and draw anew at the fountain head, is in great danger of being, as St. Paul expresses it, drawn into bondage by this false tradition. When a community claims for itself to be the depository of the truth, when it makes this claim and the duty of maintaining it a leading dogma, or rather the whole religion of its adherents, it may one day, in the name of tradition, which to the greatest number is reason, have the greatest number in its favor. Indeed the followers of its principles will far exceed the members of its communion. For a great number of those who profess to be its opponents are, as well as its adherents, the slaves of tradition; and therefore, so far as the abstract principle of tradition is concerned, it may boldly claim them as supporters. Who believes the truth for the truth's sake? Who is not to a certain extent the slave of tradition? It is not always necessary that ages and generations should conspire to form a tradition. A single man is sufficient; the authority of one is the tradition of many. Idleness and servility enter into agreement with presumption, and the attraction, the empire of tradition, is so great, that the religion which breaks at once with tradition and philosophy (I have explained what philosophy,) is by that very act a heroic religion, the most energetic appeal to all that is powerful, or valuable in the human mind, the most formidable task that has ever been imposed on the pride and indolence, but at the same time the most honorable prospect that has ever been opened to the dignity of our nature. What is proposed to our hope is the advantage, the rare glory of being able to say in all truth,

"I know in whom I have believed." But it is not our glory ; it is the glory of the Gospel ; it is our salvation. It is in the name of our salvation, of our eternal communion with God, that St. Paul seeks to put us on our guard against false philosophy and vain tradition.

Paul saw these two dangers at once, these two evils combined, and thus seeing, exclaims anxiously, but energetically, "Beware, beware, beware lest those enemies lead you into bondage !" for this is the meaning and force of his expressions. They are lively and touching. Does it not seem as if you saw the inhabitants of a fortunate island wandering fearless on their native shore, too near doubtless to that ocean which is the highway of their enemies ? Their eye, unable from the low and level shore, to reach far over the sea, perceives not the fatal ships which are freighted with their chains. But a vigilant sentinel standing on the top of a rock, (it is the rock of salvation,) a vigilant sentinel, (it is Paul,) gives a signal to his companions of the approaching danger. No sooner has he seen these ships upon the horizon, than with true presentiment, he sees servitude and desolation on these happy shores, and from the height of this rock reaching to the sky, he sends forth the timely alarm, "The enemy ! the enemy ! Take heed, imprudent men, that they do not lead you into bondage. Take heed, Christian novices, that they do not mislead you by specious discourses ; that they do not rob you of the glorious liberty of the children of God, a liberty scarcely conquered, scarcely tasted. Take heed that they do not deprive you of him, who is liberty itself, that Jesus before whose look have fallen all the chains with which you were loaded by an alarmed conscience, by habitual sin, the power of the flesh, the fear of suffering, the fear of death. Take heed ; for soon, and without your perceiving it, nothing of this mighty, living Christ will remain to you, but instead of him, a dead and useless Christ. Take heed ; others who

had received him like you, now wander without light and without a guide, without God and without hope, in the dark valley of this mortal life. Take heed, for the greatest evils have often been the work of an imperceptible moment, and equally in the spiritual as in the temporal life, shall "poverty come as one that travelleth, and want as an armed man."—Prov. vi. 11.

## THE PRECAUTIONS OF FAITH.

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"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."—Col. ii. 8, 9.

THE Apostle has singled out two enemies of the mystery of Jesus Christ, philosophy and tradition. We may believe that this was not the first time he had met with them, and that he had been engaged with them in personal combat. He knew perhaps by experience, how dangerous are their approaches, and how deadly their grasp. They perhaps had made a persecutor of the Gospel of him who at a later period was its Apostle. It was they that had made him take a part in the death of Stephen, almost as odious as that of the executioners of that martyr. For tradition and philosophy have their fanatics; they can persecute and they can hate. Christian faith itself until it has become love, being only a system of tradition, gives no security against such shameful excess. How much must the remembrance of having himself been under such a bondage have increased Paul's anxiety, on seeing the danger of the Colossians; and in a personal

interview, how penetrating and expressive must his accent have been in pronouncing the simple words, "Take heed!" Be this as it may, he speaks of the danger as a man who knows and has measured it; there is not in the passage under consideration, a single word which does not attest this. Observe his touching endeavor to counterbalance the disadvantage of his absence, his urgent exhortation to remain firm in the faith, rooted and grounded to abound in this faith, and always thank God for it anew. All this should have engaged the Colossians, and should engage us to *take heed* according to the Apostle's exhortation. But what is it to *take heed*? This remains for us to consider.

Does *take heed* mean simply, be distrustful, fear, tremble? Evidently not, dear brethren. There would be no meaning in the words, if that was all. To distrust and fear is to take heed to little purpose, or rather is not to take heed at all. To *take heed*, means literally to be on our guard; but we cannot be so, if we have not the means. To take heed, then, is to surround ourselves with certain precautions, certain safeguards, certain means of defence. What are these in the case in question?

Many will think that to take heed, is to take flight; in other words, where doctrine is concerned to refused to listen, to stop our ears. It would be necessary in the first place, that the thing was possible, but it is not. The sources of objections are too numerous, the forms which they may assume too various, the means and opportunities too easily renewed, and their address in introducing themselves too crafty, they have too many secret spies within the fortress, to allow us to flatter ourselves that we shall meet them seldom, still less that we shall not meet them at all. It would first of all be necessary to know them by their appearance. But how? they have sometimes been long at our side, when we think them far off. Who can guarantee that in the hum-

blest station, and the most profound retreat, we shall never be assailed by them? And what, pray, will you do, if they come from yourselves, if they are formed within you? Besides, did they all come from without us, nothing is more subtle than the miasma of infidelity and doubt. Whenever they exist, they diffuse themselves through the air, and we inhale without seeing them. Objections hardly require to be articulate in order to be heard. They attach to all subjects, impregnate all discourses, they enter at every pore, we are invested before we think ourselves assailed.

The persons who believe it so easy to avoid these rencounters suppose the objections of error to be exactly similar to the temptations of sin, against which we certainly ought to shut the door of our heart; and do we not ask God daily not to lead us into temptation? But it is easy to see, brethren, that the analogy does not hold, or at least that while the law which enjoins us to shun temptation is absolute, that of shutting our ear to the objections of infidelity, or of heresy, is subject to exceptions. As it is impossible not to find persons either disposed or compelled to hear these objections, and nevertheless incapable of refuting them, some at least must undertake to listen, in order that they may be able to answer for the rest. This the writers in defence of Christianity have done at all times. This St. Paul himself did with a force and prudence which have never been surpassed. Besides, we do not see that believers are absolutely safe, in obstinately declining to combat, and shutting themselves up in their creed, as in a fortress. It will not be long a fortress. For just as when a country is invaded, and all passes are seized by the enemy, the citadel must surrender; so the faith which has not ventured to descend into the plain, which has refused discussion while enveloped on all sides by infidelity, unless it receive miraculous support from on high, is obliged at last to capitulate. It lived only on general con-

sent, and when this fails, it falls. Before it fell, much evil had been already done in uncertain wavering minds ; for on seeing it retire behind the high walls of its tradition, (in fact all it does is to oppose one tradition to another,) it might have been said to it, and has been said, if your reasons for believing are so feeble that they cannot make head against the reasons for not believing, why do you believe ? and if they are strong, why are you afraid to enter the lists with your adversaries ? It is certain, brethren, that an infidelity which the least sound awakens, was not dead, and that a religion to which the least shock is mortal, was scarcely alive. The enemies of Christianity would have at least the appearance of reason, and a sufficient excuse for their infidelity, if they saw religion placing itself on regimen, like a patient who owes the prolongation of his sad existence to endless precautions, and renounces life in order to keep him from dying. Christians so acting would have calumniated Christianity, and, I fear, not calumniated it in vain.

It is admitted that the Christian is called to give an account of his faith, and that one method of giving honor to the Gospel, is to show that it is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance." If so, must we not admit that the Christian ought not absolutely to avoid meeting objections, since to answer the objections of infidelity, is to give account of our faith ? Those who present objections to a Christian, should not be allowed to part with him with the unhappy idea that he believes without proof, and that his faith is only a stupid prejudice. My meaning is not that he should consider himself bound to expose the weakness or falsehood of every argument ; it is enough, if to the reasons on which their infidelity rests, he respectfully and meekly opposes the reasons on which he grounds his faith. Of some more may be required than this, but of none less ; for the most ignorant, as well as the most learned, have reasons for believing, reasons,



if not similar in nature, perhaps equal in value to the reasons of the learned.

Let us halt here, brethren. The case which we have just supposed, that of the unlearned Christian encountering the learned infidel or heretic, deserves our best attention ; not only because in the world, and consequently among Christians, the ignorant are more numerous than the learned, but also because what we have to say as to the ignorant, is of interest for all Christians. I have said *ignorant*. Do I mean those who know absolutely nothing ? If this ignorance, implying complete stupidity, could exist among intelligent beings ; if there were intelligent beings who know nothing, and could learn nothing, it is too clear that they would have nothing to say, and that consequently we could have no direction to give them in regard to their conduct towards unbelievers. Under the name of ignorant, therefore, we must understand, in general, those who on any one subject, or on several subjects, are less knowing than others. It is necessary also, in order to embrace all the cases under the same head, to include among the ignorant, the simple ; that is, not those who have absolutely no intellect, but have it in an inferior degree. In this way any man, however learned, is ignorant in respect of some other, and however able, is simple in respect of one who is abler. The ablest or most learned in one matter, becomes simple or ignorant in another, so that he who was formerly inferior, becomes superior. Supreme rank in knowledge, or intellect, is probably not possessed by any individual, at least no one has a universal and absolute superiority over the rest of mankind. Even if such a mortal prodigy existed, he would be ignorant and simple in comparison with angels, at all events in comparison with God, before whom all wisdom and knowledge vanish away.

What is the result of all we have said ? Nothing else, or at least nothing more clearly than this : That if the cer-

tainty of faith, the privilege of being a Christian, depended on knowledge and intellect; if one could not be a Christian without being able to answer all the objections which science may suggest, or intellect put into shape, the number of Christians would be infinitely small, or strictly speaking, there would be neither Christians nor Christianity. For after you have solved all the objections which are presented, how do you know that there may not be others more specious, of which you have never heard, and which you are not in a state to answer? And though you should know, and have refuted all which have arisen in your time, is this enough? Would it not be necessary to have refuted all which will yet arise; and you know that they will arise to the end of time. Might it not be said, at a later period, that it was fortunate for you, that you had lived before these objections, since you could not have disposed of them so easily, as you disposed of those of your own time? You feel surprised at my language; but you feel little surprise when you hear it said of your forefathers, or of the early Christians, that they believed at a cheap rate, and that they would have believed less easily, or would even have been infidels, in a critical and inquisitive age like ours. And if this is said of your forefathers, may not posterity say it of you? When then on this view will it be permitted to believe? Will it be when there are no more objections, no more opponents? when the last Christian gets the last word in discussing with the last infidel? This in truth is the utmost that can be said; for it may always be supposed that were a new infidel to appear, he might propose some difficulty which had never been considered before.

But without pushing matters to this extreme, let us confine ourselves, brethren, to actual facts, and to what is passing under our eye. It is certain that if to be a Christian it is necessary to be able to answer every objection, there are few, very few Christians. In the case supposed, there would

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not be many, even though all Christians were to become profoundly learned, for nothing hinders infidels from acquiring the same advantages; and hence on any given subject, the learned Christian might find his master. And how would you make all Christians profoundly learned? How would you give all of them the faculties, the leisure, the necessary dispositions? The supposition is absurd. You may, I love to think it, you may place within the reach of the great majority the proofs, the simple and luminous proofs of the truth of Christianity, so that each may for himself possess the title-deeds of the great family of which his profession makes him a member. But this is not the thing required; it is to be able to elude the snare of a subtle argument, or to be able on sufficient grounds to deny a fact which is affirmed, or affirm a fact which is denied. When will you be able to bring the simple and ignorant, the great majority, such a length as this?

I know not the counsels of God, but I doubt whether it be one of the purposes of his wisdom, altogether to stop the mouth of Infidelity, and make his religion in all its parts evident, like a truth in arithmetic; thus leaving nothing for good inclination, seriousness, and meditation to do in embracing the truth, in the search of which all the powers of the mind have to our day been so usefully exercised.

Suppose, however, brethren, that this miracle were performed, and that by the natural course of things, and the progress of human knowledge, infidelity was struck dumb in presence of Jesus Christ, one thing is certain: it is not yet dumb, nor was it dumb in the days of our fathers, and therefore it might always be said of us, and of them, that we believed by anticipation, and on insufficient grounds, inasmuch as the difficulties were not then exhausted, and infidelity had not by silence confessed its defeat. Once more then, if St. Paul's exhortation, when he says to us "Take

need," means that we ought always to hold ourselves ready to give a peremptory answer to all objections, no Christian is entitled to the name, and Christianity itself cannot be said to exist.

Neither good sense, nor the conviction we have of the wisdom of God will allow us to suppose that our faith, after being founded on proofs which have satisfied our reason, must ever be kept in suspense, or incessantly brought into question by the sophistry with which infidelity may, to the end of time, be pleased to assail it. Though such objections should be raised in regard to matters into which our mind has not penetrated, and a science to which we are strangers; though, while capable of saying in general why we believe, we are not capable of solving every unexpected difficulty which may be presented, it follows not that we must defer our faith and our hope. What! are we to be always disputing and never acting? eternally building our house, and never inhabiting it? It is absolutely necessary either that we be able to believe although not able to solve all objections, or that God give to his Revelation an instantaneous, overwhelming evidence. In this case faith might be said to be destroyed by its apparent triumph. It would be no longer faith, but sight; and all that generous activity which terminates in belief, or which develops itself in the train of faith, would be absolutely suppressed. The Christian would know, he would not believe. If so, would he still be a Christian?

We are not then obliged, as Christians, and in order to be Christians, to refute all the objections which tradition or philosophy may be pleased to urge. At this rate we should never be Christians; for infidelity will never exhaust her store of specious arguments and plausible assertions. The old mines are exhausted, but other veins will be discovered. In search of poison, it will dig down to hell. It is not desirable that it should be otherwise. Science, in its endless evolutions, alternately brings to light and dispels difficulties

which the firmest believers cannot but observe, and which they are sometimes the first to discover.

And now, brethren, be pleased to observe that, in this discussion, we have not availed ourselves of all our advantages; we have set before you infidelity, properly so called, and not heresy. From age to age, infidelity has found its master; and, perhaps, were she to take account of the battles which she has lost, or were she to consider the fact that a religion which has been more contested than ever any other religion was, is still standing erect, full of life and full of hope, she would consider it her best course to keep silence. If she is not silent, it is because she cannot be; and we may expect that she will continue speaking to the end of the world. Be this as it may, it is certain that the infidelity which denies religion is a far less powerful opponent than the heresy which corrupts it. We need not tell you that, in the latter case, the adversaries are far more numerous, since they include not only the adherents of pure Christian doctrine, but several of the enemies of this purity, the followers of heresy; but we will tell you that there has always been more success against the arguments of infidelity than against the subtleties of heresy; that it has always been easier to defend the truth of the Christian religion taken as a whole, than to defend the individual truths of which it is composed. Heresy is more specious in its language, and more tempting in its delusions than infidelity; one of its worst deceptions is, that it is not infidelity. Infidelity, however, it is, though in another manner and on a different ground; infidelity in the livery of faith, under the semblance, and it may be with the reality of love and zeal, since heresy has often been seen as eager in defending Christianity as it was busy in corrupting, or, as we have said, disparaging it. Yes, heresy is infidelity. The apostles have never hesitated nor varied on this subject; and it is

doubtless not to infidels properly so called, but to audacious heretics, that it is necessary to apply the words of St. John, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." 1 John ii. 19. But heresy does not thus present itself. It raises, often sincerely raises, the standard of Jesus Christ; and, perhaps, appears all the more Christian that it believes itself to be so; and announces no other intention than to purify and simplify traditional dogmatism, or to discover in the words of Scripture a more intimate and exquisite meaning than the vulgar are wont to find in it. That alone, brethren, gives it a great advantage; but a still greater is, that the matter of which it treats is more delicate, and less palpable, that the facts which it brings under discussion are less material, and less precise. Here deceptive appearances are multiplied, and imposture becomes more easy; and here, consequently, in order not to be dazzled, a keener perception a more intimate knowledge of religion is required, a spiritual tact not often met with, and above all, a single eye which sees objects as they are, not in consequence of superior penetration, but superior candor. Herein lies the great advantage which our fickleness, or our want of simplicity, or the secret connivance of our heart gives to heresy. This it is which makes it so difficult to untie the knots which she weaves, and will enable her to the end of the world to perplex a commencing faith; so that should the time come when infidelity, confounded or destroyed, shall no longer lift her voice, this other infidelity which we call heresy will still be heard, and be able to find in philosophy or in tradition specious arguments and embarrassing objections.

And, brethren, if we cannot prevent objections from being raised, no more can we prevent them from causing embarrassment; we can neither anticipate nor limit their influence upon the mind of any particular believer. How

strong however his conviction, we cannot answer for his not being shaken; we cannot be sure that by repetition and combination with each other, and by forming a secret alliance with the interests of the natural man, they will not obscure the clearness of his views, or weaken his hopes. Then, in the same individual a confused intellect may be united with a well-disposed heart, a tendency to doubt with great moral integrity; in fine, there may be too little information to avoid being perplexed, and, as it were, confounded by a specious display of erudition. In such a case, on what will the result depend? On the nature of the encounter. Ah! all this makes it desirable that faith have some additional foundation; that it be founded, as the Apostle says to the Corinthians, not on the wisdom of man but on the power of God. The thing thus desired has been granted. God has granted it by anticipation. We are bold to say it was impossible that God should not grant it.

God evidently intended that his religion, which is a history, should have proofs like those of any other history. To overlook this design would imply that we had not opened the Bible, and to despise it would be to despise God himself. Accordingly we do not despise it. We bless God for having given this support to our faith, and fed each of us with children's meat before giving us strong food. We say of this proof what St. Paul said of the word of the prophets, that it is sure; that the study of the proof has contributed much to the spread and preservation of Christianity in the world, and led many souls to the portal of their heavenly Father's house. Our wish is that these proofs, unjustly despised by some, and rashly neglected by others, should be studied; we even desire that they should be reduced to their elementary principles, and placed within general reach. But after all, brethren, three things remain certain. First, these proofs have not silenced, and for a long

time to come will not silence infidelity, which still finds, as it did in the time of St. Paul, specious arguments to assail our faith. A second thing equally certain is, that after we have acquiesced in the proofs, a more important work remains—to identify ourselves in spirit with the truths which we have received by the intellect ; and this is faith properly so called. The third is, that very happily, in the case of many persons, this last work not only completes the first, but suffices by itself alone, and renders all other proof unnecessary.

Be not surprised, brethren ; this work is the principal, the other is only preliminary.

Yes, dear brethren ; the truth has proofs in itself ; and when we furnish ourselves with external proofs in support of this truth, it is to all intents as if we were lighting a candle to see the sun. There are such proofs, however ; and since there are, it cannot be doubted that they were necessary. In compassion to our weakness, God has placed at our disposal that body of historical proof, which, in its combination and details, deserves our admiration as much as the most exquisite arrangements of the organic world. These proofs lead as far as the door of the sanctuary, leaving it to us thereafter to remain outside or to enter. We may remain upon the threshold, and remain for ever, holding in our hand the title-deeds which give us right of entrance ; but if a last step, (and this decisive step is a thousand-fold better than all the journey we have previously made,) if a last impulse which is divine makes us enter, (I mean, brethren, if we place ourselves in personal and intimate relation with the truth which has just been certified to us,) then we believe with a new faith and on new evidence ; then, to express it more properly, we believe truly, and, in so far as concerns ourselves, have no more need of the external proofs which prepared our faith, as we feel no more anxiety in regard to the external difficulties by which an attempt



might be made to shake it. Our faith had, till then, been founded in some measure on the wisdom of men : for though God himself had prepared the elements on which we reasoned, the demonstration resulting from it did not differ from any demonstration by which we assure ourselves of an ordinary fact. Our faith was then founded on the wisdom of man, but now it is founded on the power of God.

God so willed it, brethren, and Jesus Christ expressly enjoined it. It is true, he has not excluded external demonstration, or that furnished by outward facts which surround the object of faith, but are not themselves that object, but still he has assigned the first place to the internal proof with which we ought to begin ; and with which, at least, it is absolutely necessary to end. "Believe my words," said he to the Jews, "or if not," (if you cannot believe with that faith which attaches itself without the aid of external proof to the very object of faith), "if not, believe me for the works' sake." Truth, then, according to Jesus Christ, is entitled to be believed on its own account, and is itself the light by which we see all other things. Must there still be means employed to see the light ? This procedure, however, is not enjoined on all men alike, although, in strictness, it might be. But we become really Christian only in so far as we at least end where we ought to have begun. In regard to each individual, the moment must arrive when faith will no longer be founded on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God, and when it will separate itself without regret from the arguments with which it was at first contented ; just as a conqueror who, assured of his conquest, fearlessly sends away the ships which had brought him to the port the moment he has disembarked.

This faith the apostle characterizes by saying that it is founded on the power of God ; because, in fact, it is not by any ordinary means of which we can give account, but by

the power of God that this evidence is made complete. Truth comes to us quite alone ; it does not adduce any foreign testimony, it appeals to no authority but its own ; it shows itself, and we believe in it as we believe in the light of the sun, as we believe in ourselves. Here, however, there is nothing mystical or inconceivable in the principle ; the fact is at once supernatural and natural. Truth must produce this impression upon a heart which naturally loves it ; and which, on its being presented, does nothing more than recognize it. It must appear to it with an evidence of which no idea can be formed by him who, though it also presents itself to him, has no eyes to behold it. Here it is with truth as with those halves of souls which, according to the idea of an ancient sage, seek their other halves in life, recognize each other before they have well met, and, when recognized, at once unite so closely that they cannot afterwards be distinguished from each other. Truth, indeed, may not have produced this effect all at once even upon the best disposed ; but, when by the gradual union of the heart with truth, the old man with his lusts has been put off, when we are born again ; when we have been clothed with another nature, and with affections of another order ; when we feel drawn towards things invisible as instinctively as we formerly were towards things visible ; when we repent, obey, love, and feel the tie which attaches us to goodness drawn closer and closer every day ; in one word, when we feel the contradictions of nature reconciled, all its enigmas solved, all its discrepancies explained, when the truth is miraculously re-established in the soul, how can we avoid appealing to the truth which has produced this miraculous result ? how question the reality of the relations which have been formed ? how doubt the existence of what we feel, or speak evil of what we love ?

A belief thus formed, is never lost, can no more be lost

than an animated being can lose its instincts ; for this belief has become one of the instincts of the soul.

Brethren, if all those who sincerely profess the mystery of the fulness of Christ believed in this internal and living faith, this faith which, so to speak, is changed into sight, and of which we have endeavored to give an idea, it would be unnecessary (at least in so far as they are concerned) to warn them against the wiles of philosophy and tradition, and to cry to them with St. Paul, "Take heed!" But this faith to which it is necessary to aspire, is not, at the outset, the portion of all believers. There are many to whom the staff of external proof will long be necessary, and for whom this staff must as far as possible be preserved ; there are even few who have tasted the heavenly gift, and the powers of a world to come, to such a degree as to be beyond the reach of the arrows of infidelity. Do those of sin never reach them ? There were doubtless, if proportion is considered, as many living Christians in the Church of Colosse as in ours, and yet it is to this Church, and all its members without exception, that St. Paul cries in our text, "Take heed that no one lead you into bondage, by a philosophy full of deceit, and by the tradition of men." What St. Paul wrote to the Colossians, may not we, brethren, say to you ?

We say then to all, "Take heed." And this means first : Place yourselves above the necessity, and far above the peril of combat, by acquiring this precious faith of which we have just been discoursing, or, which comes to the same thing, by "holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience." I Tim. iii. 9. For this faith is acquired, and is acquired by the act of the will. We do not order ourselves to believe ; no, but we order ourselves to do the works of faith ; or rather the faith which we already have, orders us to do works. Do then these works ; not only external, but internal works ; not only works which have other per-

sions for their objects, but works of mortification, self-denial, vigilance, spiritual discipline, works of which you are yourselves the subjects. Do the works of the faith which you have ; do, if I dare say so, the works of the faith which you have not. You have not yet, perhaps, that deep-seated faith which is the union of the whole being with the truth ; you have perhaps only that preliminary faith which has its point of support without your soul. No matter ; as to the object, (I mean as to what you believe, if not as to the manner in which you believe,) it is one same faith. In the one case as in the other, you believe that God is a jealous God, you believe that God loved you with an everlasting love, you believe that his Son came upon the earth to seek and to save that which was lost, and consequently to seek you ; you believe that this loving friend continually intercedes for you with the Father. This is enough ; your duty is assigned, your course is traced, enter on it and proceed. If belief is necessary to action, it is equally true that action is necessary to belief. An incessant faith produces action, and action produces a better faith. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and those, says Jesus Christ, who will do the will of my Father will know (those who know already will always know better) whether my doctrine be of God, or whether I speak of myself. It is the virtue of the Christian life to rivet and seal Christian faith in the depth of the soul. Truth becomes clearer and dearer the more sacrifices we make to it. What we do for it renders it more proper to us, unites it more and more closely to our soul. We prove this by experience in proportion as we apply it to our life, because a life of obedience, holiness, and love, is a life of order and truth ; and we cannot call that faith deceptive in which we see all the fruits of truth budding as upon their proper stem. It is very difficult for error to shake a faith which already has so many monuments in our life, and to which

graces, unequivocal graces, are evidently annexed. The certainty which results from such experience, must be above all assaults. Give this answer, then, brethren, to the warning voice of the apostle ; hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, from which neither philosophy nor tradition will ever more be able to dissever it.

We attach still another meaning to the expression, "Take heed," by applying it to a great part of believers. It belongs not to all to hazard or seek such rencounters. No doubt each must know in whom, and why he believes, and we have been pointing out the best manner of knowing it. Each must be ready to give the reasons of his faith, whether they be comprehended or not ; and without doubt, if these reasons are experimental and deep-seated, it cannot be pretended that the natural man comprehends them, for they are spiritual. But it belongs not to every one to engage in all kinds of discussion. Unless it be pretended that each is bound to be ignorant of nothing, it must be admitted that it is not the duty of each to accept every challenge. A Christian may say, that with more knowledge than it has been permitted him to acquire, an objection which seems to him embarrassing, might appear very frivolous. He may say, I will be annoyed perhaps by an objection which at bottom is nothing, at which an abler man would laugh, and which an infidel would take good care not to urge in presence of one better informed. Is it reasonable that I should allow myself to be overcome by a phantom, and that I should stake my peace, my strength, my spiritual life, against an adversary who risks nothing with me, and who plays a winning game ? No brethren, no ; but I hasten to add, that there ought here to be neither cowardice nor sloth. If we refuse one combat, it must be to accept another. He who turns about in presence of one enemy, must show front to another. He must justify to himself this apparent want of courage. He must put

himself in a condition to oppose internal evidence to external objections. When he wants words, his life must become a refutation of heresy, so that heresy seeing his actions may begin to feel doubtful of itself, and to ask whether Jesus Christ, from whom this man evidently receives grace upon grace, does not really possess the glorious fulness which it has hitherto refused to admit.

But, in fine, whether or not you have a calling to discuss objections which tend to disparage Jesus Christ, they have reached you, and you have been forced to hear them. You have comprehended them, you have judged them worthy of examination, you feel yourselves capable of this examination, you feel obliged to make it, perhaps, for yourselves and for your brethren. So far well ; but at this critical moment, examine yourselves. On meeting with an objection which tends to disparage Jesus Christ, and with him Christianity, examine whether it makes your heart tremble with alarm, or beat with sympathy. See whether there is not something in you which is secretly in intelligence with the enemy, and makes you wish that Jesus Christ be lowered ; for the lowering of Jesus Christ is that of your obligations, your sacrifices, your religion. I do not say that even on discovering in yourself such secret connivance, you ought to refuse the combat which is offered, or decline the examination which is proposed. No ; but in every case it is necessary that you know yourself.

It is necessary at the moment of rencounter to put your heart in safety. It is necessary to reserve in your inner man certain principles which no discussion is permitted to encroach upon, or even bring into question. Be the case with all the rest and be the result of this discussion what it may, it remains irrevocably fixed in your conscience—God is God, I must live for him, love him above all, do his will, nothing but his will, his whole will. You have arrived at these con-

victions, I admit, by the very path by which it is pretended that you ought not to pass; these convictions have taken root in the very mystery which they are obliging you to discuss. But this is nothing at all to the purpose; they are true in themselves, they are henceforth evident to you; the lessening or the destruction of the mystery of your faith would doubtless do them a mortal injury, by uprooting them from your heart, though they cannot be uprooted from your mind. After all and in spite of all, they are truths. You know this. Well, you say to yourselves: Before as after discussion this is true, this is necessary; all that contradicts it, all that weakens it, is necessarily false; I will admit nothing at variance with these immutable truths; if I cannot make them a touchstone to recognize truth, they will be a touchstone to discern error. And as it is still true that God is the natural protector of all truth, this adds to all your convictions one conviction more, and it is that you may pray with confidence, and even ought to pray that he would maintain the belief of these truths in your heart. Well, if by his protection this faith is put beyond danger, we say to you as was said to the knights in the tournaments of the middle ages, On! gallant combatants! We feel at ease. This faith will be the guardian of the other.

Take heed, nevertheless, the apostle continues to say; the ground is covered with snares. It is necessary to know them and see them. If you had to do only with infidelity, its name would warn you, and perhaps a strong feeling of duty would be necessary to make you risk the encounter. It insults or at least denies your creed, and however little your faith may be, you feel a stronger repugnance on its approach. But heresy does not insult, does not deny, or at least if it denies, it is while affirming. It honors religion, it only wishes to perfect it, or rather it wishes to bring it back to its primitive purity. It is a respectful infidelity.

Let this homage not deceive you. Be not so simple as allow yourself to feel secure. Charitable to the intentions which must always be supposed good, and which are so oftener than is supposed, show no favor to error itself, and look to its acts, not its professions. Above all, do not allow yourself to be led away by any self-evident truth, which may appear amidst errors which tend to diminish the fulness of Christ, or the fulness of his grace, or the fulness of his wisdom. If because of this partial truth you admit the error, you will admit all errors ; for they all have truth, and indeed are only truths misplaced. Do not therefore consider merely whether there is truth in the opinion which is proposed to you. There is truth necessarily, truth always, but the question is, whether some other truth which ought to be the complement, or counterpart of that which you perceive, has not been suppressed. Ask your opponent what he makes of that truth in the system which he proposes ; insist upon his giving it a place, and see what effect the restoration of this suppressed truth will have, with reference to the mystery of Christ. Hold fast this principle, this legitimate and incontestable principle, and you will see many phantoms disappear.

We have not said all that might be said on this important subject, and how can we ? . But instead of saying too little, we should have said too much, if the end of all these precautions, and if Paul's exhortation were indifferent to you, and if, instead of addressing persons who believe in the fulness of Jesus Christ, and who feel the fulness of this mystery, we were speaking in presence of men who have not received this truth, or who, having received it from mere complaisance, do not cling to it so much as to many less certain truths, which relate to temporal or social order. We have not supposed, and we do not suppose that this is your case. Without being able to affirm that all in this assembly believe, with a personal and living faith, in the mystery of which St.



Paul here treats, we are entitled to presume that the greater part would be sincerely alarmed at the idea of seeing Jesus Christ destroyed or impaired. Even where a very clear account is not given of the reasons of one's faith, there may be something more than a faith of prejudice. We may know, we may feel that Jesus Christ is the key to all the enigmas which perplexed human nature, the only hope of a troubled conscience, the only name not only by which we can be saved, but by which this earthly existence has a meaning, and is not a cruel mockery. Who amongst us, though daily separating himself from Jesus Christ, would wish to see Christ taken away? Who amongst us has not, according to the expression of the apostle in the text, in one sense or other, received Jesus Christ? received him with more or less respect, treated him with more or less regard, cultivated him with more or less assiduity, but, at all events received him? Be this as it may, it is to those I speak, to my companions in sin, misery, and exile, who out of Christ see nothing which could accord with their destiny, or fill up the immense void in their heart, or console them in all the sorrow of their soul, and dissipate all its terrors; to those who, having met Jesus Christ and contemplated him, have exclaimed, Certainly this is the Desire of nations! Certainly this is the way, the truth, and the life! and who, after having thus found Jesus Christ, if they happened to lose him would no longer find any thing, no longer seek any thing but him, being deeply and truly convinced that whosoever has not embraced him by faith, remains without God and without hope in the world: To those I speak, and I say to them: Do you repent of having embraced Jesus Christ, or do you congratulate yourselves on having met with him? Are you happy to know him? Do you feel, at least, that it would make you unhappy not to know him? Well! take heed that he be not taken from you; for however little you enjoy

the possession of him to-day, to-morrow you will be miserable at the loss of him, and to allow him to be disparaged is, (doubt it not,) to lose him.

After having received Jesus Christ, you wish doubtless to walk in him; after having believed, you wish not only to continue to believe, but to believe more and more. Alas! that so many things should oppose each other in your heart, that your unbelief should lie in so many directions, and assume so many forms, and that the ordinary temptations of life should make so many breaches in your faith! Will it still be possible for dexterous sophisms, for a few high-sounding expressions, perhaps even devoid of meaning, to sport with your convictions, and dissipate this treasure which it is so difficult to guard? The thing is only too easy, only too probable. May this faith grow within you by the exercise which you give it, and in tears and joy acquire that triumphant brightness which puts all darkness to flight! May you thus quickly gain the victory over that false philosophy and human tradition, which you must sooner or later encounter! But while waiting for the happy day which will shelter you for ever, watch over this treasure which is still imperfectly secured; keep your heart, keep your mind. Employ for your defence all the noble means which God allows you, and commands you to use, those noble and loyal arms which are carried, as St. Paul says, on the right hand and on the left, but which in whatever hand carried, must, as he also says, be, "the armor of righteousness." 2 Cor. vi. 7. Now the combat in question is not one of those which may issue in a dubious result, and allow both sides to claim the victory. You will come forth vanquished or triumphant, weaker than before or stronger; if you come not off with a better, it will be with a weaker faith; if your faith is not lessened, it will be improved. This must be the issue. You must be more than ever rooted in Jesus Christ by faith; if formerly you were

poor, you must now be rich in faith ; if formerly you thanked yourselves for believing, you must now joyfully give thanks for it. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him ; rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Col. ii. 6, 7. Such is the exhortation of the apostle, and in a manner the sum of his address, and such is the wish which we form for you and for ourselves, entreating our heavenly Father to have pity on his children, to guide them in this darksome world, and make them walk among those rocks and briers as on a level path, to the glory of his goodness. Amen.

## IMAGINARY PERFECTION.

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“Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, . . . after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.”—COL. ii. 20, 22, 23.

THE law of the Gospel, my dear hearers, is a law of perfection. It is so by its very principle. For, in making the object of our faith to consist in the personal and intimate union of our nature with God, in the humiliation and voluntary death of Him in whom, by whom, and for whom are all things, in heaven and on earth, it demands our whole heart and life for this God manifest in the flesh. God having been made one with us, we ought to be one with him. But acknowledging this, do we not acknowledge that we are called to perfection? It is true that the law of the Gospel is a law of liberty; it is true that before it the minute and numberless precepts of the old law have disappeared like shadows before the sun; but this is merely because it is perfect. All those particular precepts which seem to extend the sphere of obedience really impose limits upon it, for this

simple reason, that when a particular thing is commanded another is forbidden. How numerous soever the precepts, they are not innumerable; however remote the limit, it lies somewhere. This law may be oppressive without being infinite. Well then, there is another law which is infinite without being oppressive: it is the law of liberty; in other words, the law of love, which is the liberty of the soul. Love receives, knows no limit. "The love of Jesus," says Thomas A' Kempis, "always stimulates to what is most perfect. He who loves, runs, flies. He is joyful and free, and nothing stops him; he gives all for all. Love often knows no measure. Its fervor makes it boil over beyond all measure. It never alleges impossibility, because it believes all things possible and lawful."\*

Hence, brethren, it is to those who have accepted the law of the Gospel as a law of liberty or love that such language as the following is addressed: "Be perfect." 2 Cor. xiii. 11. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 48. At least it is to them only that these precepts have an obvious meaning; it is to them that the entire sacrifice of their persons appears simply a reasonable service. Romans xii. 1. And as to those who are *not* yet under the government of this holy liberty of love, precepts like these warn while astonishing them. Just as the former class proceeded from the principle to the consequence—in other words, from perfect love in God to perfect obedience in man—the latter, on encountering this precept, are, as it were, forced to go back from the consequence to the principle; in other words, from perfect obedience in man

\* Amor Jesu ad desideranda semper perfectiora excitat. Amor liber est et non tiencetur. Dat omnia pro omnibus. Amor modum saepe nescit, sed super omnem modum fervescit: de impossibilitate non causatur, quia cuncta sibi posse et licere arbitratur.—*Imit.* iii. c. 5.

to perfect love in God. In taking account of the precept they have been led to take account of the motive. They go from the law to the lawgiver, from man to God; and, if we may so speak, from the cross of the Christian to the cross of Jesus Christ. In one word, the law of perfection found in the Gospel has made them again find this law within themselves. Whatever surprise it may have occasioned them, they perceive that their conscience consents to it, and that their best idea was then expressed by anticipation. They feel that even independently of the Gospel they are called to perfection; that the commandment, according to the expression of St. John, is both old and new; and that the new law has done nothing more than re-engrave, by the help of a divine chisel, a primitive and eternal law.

This law of perfection, which the Gospel calls also the law of the Spirit, (because the Spirit tends naturally to perfection,) is opposed by the law of our members, or the law of the flesh, which we might call the *law of imperfection*, because incapable of denying the law absolutely, it necessarily contents itself with weakening it or changing its nature. Practically, it goes further than to lower the view we take of our duties and our destiny; it furnishes arguments, it teaches a system for the use of our unbelief; it traces ideal limits where love sees none; it distinguishes arbitrarily between precepts and counsels. It marks out a point sometimes further off and at other times nearer—a point at which it is indeed necessary to arrive, but at which each is at liberty to stop. It finds in Christian morality, with much that is necessary, something that is superfluous. Perfection it regards only as a *specialty* which is not binding without a particular vocation, and which is cultivated rather from taste than duty. It indeed does not condemn those who cultivate it; occasionally it admires them. Its language is, *The beautiful for them, the good for me.* Now it is well known

that the beautiful is only the ornament of the good, and that no man is bound to be sublime. But its views are not always so moderate, and it would only be necessary to contradict it on this point, to insist upon the necessity of what appears to it a work of supererogation, to force from it an avowal that, according to its final conclusion and fundamental idea, every thing beyond the limits which it has traced is mere fancy and chimera.

It is true that it would not be easy for it to show us the place where the great river of Christian truth divides and begins to run in two channels, the one with a flood which continues flowing on toward the ocean of God, and the other in a sluggish stream which becomes stagnant, and is lost in the sand long before it reaches the place of its destination. It would be very difficult to find two christianities in Christianity, two distinct races in the spiritual posterity of the second Adam, two degrees of obligation in an equal grace, two Spirits in the same work. It would be difficult to make out, contrary to the declaration of Christ himself, that some may come after him without denying themselves and taking up their cross ; that by some the kingdom of heaven must be taken by force, while by others it may be gained without striking a blow ; and that in regard to a certain number of Christians the Gospel modifies the absolute terms in which it declares that "he who saveth his life shall lose it." Accordingly, brethren, without having given any proof of all this, the law of the flesh tramples the Gospel itself under its feet, and establishes a system which is alike unfounded and indefinite. Indefinite, for by supposing that obedience has limits, we must, whether we will or not, hold that disobedience has limits. We thus, by anticipation, grant every thing to the flesh when we withhold any thing from the Spirit.

But the law of the flesh, (I believe, brethren, you are too familiar with the language of the Gospel to be ignorant that

what it calls the *flesh* is the entire natural man, including his intellect and moral powers), the law of the flesh has raised up another opponent to the law of perfection.

Observe, that the object of the natural man is not to escape in one way rather than another from the just authority of God: the only object is to escape. When the prodigal son left his father after claiming his patrimony, he had not perhaps any intention to waste his substance in dissipation, to which he may not even have been particularly inclined. What determined him was his longing for independence, his impatience of paternal restraint. Perhaps when he gave himself up to excess his only motive was to prove that he was free, and get a better taste of his liberty. We too, all of us, wish to be free, but the liberty we wish is not that of love. It is the desire of this false and improper liberty that makes us quit our father's house. The giving way to this desire was man's first sin, and it is a sin of which all others are only different forms or different results. But an astonishing circumstance, and one which shows how deeply-rooted in our nature this propensity to separate our will from that of God is, that often, after having embraced the Gospel, and consequently offered ourselves to God as a living and perpetual sacrifice, without reserving any thing to ourselves, we secretly take back what we had given, and resume possession of ourselves in the very sacrifice which we make to him, and even by means of this sacrifice. Nor is this all. Under pretence of giving a better sacrifice, of separating ourselves more completely from ourselves, we, while apparently exceeding the fervor of the most zealous, and the submission of the most obedient, secure a successful resistance to the absolute authority of God. This is the most subtle and refined form of rebellion. Success would be less certain if the thing were premeditated, or rather, it is a thing which would never be undertaken if it was premedi-



tated. We could not seriously propose to ourselves an act of hypocrisy so detestable, perhaps painful; we would not take such a circuitous route to regain possession of our will. There is no room for calculation here, the thing is an impossibility. The moment we begin to calculate, we should calculate very differently. The most common would be preferred to this extraordinary way, and we would proceed to do the thing at once by the course that was easy and simple. No deception is more sure of success than that which begins by deceiving the deceiver himself, no snare more infallible than that in which he who sets it allows himself to be caught. And this is the cause why the insubordination of the heart, under the form of a more absolute and perfect submission, proves so seductive, and has so many involuntary followers. Those who furnish examples of it are, in some sort, sincere in their imposture. Before deceiving others, they are themselves deceived. But by whom? By their own heart. Our heart is our first seducer: the heart, says the prophet, is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? No one; not even does each know his own.

And because our heart, given up to itself, is continually deceiving us, it was necessary that God should give it a monitor, a censor who is never deceived. This censor, this monitor is his word. It was not enough that this word should once for all open the eyes of the natural man, who is a kind of savage that must be taught true dependence, and in this dependence, true liberty. Even in man, when freed from his wild nature, and disciplined by the Gospel, there is still to be conquered a more interior and hidden principle of revolt; there still remains to be extirpated a root of bitterness, which, if we do not guard against it, will find a soil for itself, and draw nourishment from the bosom of religion itself; there remains an infidelity to be guarded against, an infidelity which dares to charge fidelity itself with being unfaithful,

and whose language and deportment bear the impress of an extraordinary sanctity, which, if that were possible, "would deceive the very elect." Matt. xxiv. 24.

The apostles were not slow in denouncing an enemy who had busied himself in sowing pernicious tares in the bosom of the Church, and the distinct instructions which St. Paul has left us will serve at all times to detect, under his most diversified disguises, this false friend of the Gospel, who, in presenting us with the image of an elusory perfection, has no other object than to make us despise, and consequently neglect, the true perfection of the Christian life.

In doing this, brethren, St. Paul does not enter into lengthened discussion. He seldom employs argument against the partisans of this false perfection. He seldom does more than intimate by what pretexts and false semblances this subtle enemy of perfection will cover his pernicious design. He warns us like St. John not to believe every spirit, not to take up a new path on the credit of certain words which may be used alike by truth and error. He reminds us that there is a false obedience, a false humility, a false mortification as well as a true. He tells us that imperfection may easily assume the mask of a higher perfection, and that infidelity can easily pass itself off for fidelity, and fidelity in its highest form. He thus leads us to search in the Gospel, and in our own consciences, for the characteristics of true faithfulness. This which satisfies St. Paul, is sufficient for us: for, if he does not tell us what these characteristics are, all that he wrote and spoke, all that his colleagues and Jesus Christ himself taught, the whole tenor and body of the Gospel, give full and clear explanations of what is not told here, or is only hinted at.

What are the seductive appearances in which error will clothe itself in order to induce us to neglect true perfection, and embrace in its place a phantom of perfection? We

have them here, and they are—The appearance of a voluntary worship, the appearance of humility, the appearance of a holy contempt for the wants of the body.

The *reality* of each of these things is essential to Christianity. Is it voluntary worship? God declared from the days of old, that he was preparing a people of ready mind, and this people is none else than the Christian Church. Is it humility? Has not God said that he will teach his way to the humble? and has not Jesus Christ said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart?" Has not St. Paul said, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate?" Is it mortification of the flesh? It is written, "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." It is written, "Do not the will of the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." St. Paul, joining example to precept, acts so as to be able to say, "I keep my body under;" and before him Jesus Christ, to whom of right all the riches of the earth belonged, denying himself what the Creator's liberality has not denied to the foxes and fowls of the air, had not where to lay his head. But you do not suppose, brethren, that we are going to quote all the passages which prove directly or indirectly that a willing mind, humbleness of heart, and the suppression of carnal lusts, are essential to the Christian. It would be necessary, in that case, to quote the whole Gospel; and to what purpose, since you are already convinced of this truth of which we only wished to remind you in passing?

Yes, doubtless, the obedience of the Christian is a voluntary obedience, since it is the obedience of love; and in no other way could it be so. Whether we love or not the obligation is the same, we must obey; if we love not, the obedience is painful, because the law is not lovely to him in whose eyes the lawgiver is not lovely. The choice is not between obeying and not obeying, and St. Paul has well ex-

pressed it in speaking of himself: "For although I preach the Gospel," (and the humble believer will say, although I serve God) "I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me. Yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!" "For if I do this thing willingly I have a reward," (undoubtedly, the reward is already in his heart,) "but if against my will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me." 1 Cor. ix. 16, 17. You see the choice is not between obeying and not obeying, but obeying sincerely, unless indeed it be said (and we subscribe to it) that there is no true obedience without love; or, in other words, that obedience is fulfilled only in love. But I entreat you, brethren, to remember that love fulfils obedience, and does not abolish it any more than faith abolishes the law; that he who loves obeys joyfully, but still obeys; that he obeys better than before, but still obeys; that if the good which he does has become a pleasure to him, this good has not thereby ceased to be a duty. Of this last fact he will be made too sensible in the intermissions or faintings of his love; for then he will acknowledge, that the good which yesterday he did joyfully, he must to-day do, though without joy. Nothing, no attainments of the spiritual life, however sublime, can abolish obedience; and the spiritual life cannot be advancing when obedience is on the decline. The proof of progress is better obedience. The willing mind is a characteristic of the Christian; obedience is another; they walk together and run together, they grow with the same growth; the willing mind increases with obedience, and obedience with the willing mind; for they have the same principle, and are only two forms of the same life.

It is this intimate union, this entire oneness, so to speak, of the willing mind and obedience that the prince of evil would destroy. He tries to persuade us that the one element excludes the other, or that, at least, they can only ex-

feeble each other. Your mind, he seems to say, will be willing only when you shall forget that you obey, or rather when you shall lose the feeling of obedience. Strange idea! as if he who follows his chain willingly had no chain; (ah! will he not feel it the moment he stops?) as if love, which is represented as the enemy of obedience, were any thing else than a mediator, a means of reconciling obedience and liberty! But still, in this way we are seduced. The principle of obedience is taken from us in the name of love; and, under the pretext of teaching us to render God a service more worthy of him, we are taught only to obey ourselves. As well might we be told once more, "Ye will be as gods." For, if we obey not, or if we only obey ourselves, what are we? It is at least certain that we are no longer men; and since angels obey, we are no longer, as Scripture says, a little lower than the angels; we are far superior to them. After this it were vain to talk of service and worship; there is no worship without obedience. Profusion of acts, diversity of observances, largeness of sacrifices, are not obedience; we do not employ our will to obey; we find ourselves entire where all idea of ourselves ought to have been lost; we protest on our knees against our dependence, and elevate ourselves thus high not to be nearer to our principle, but to be beyond the reach of the law; we do more than the law asks in order to escape from what it asks. Every thing is good, every thing easy to us compared with obedience.

I know well, brethren, that with quite an opposite intention, with the view of yielding a better obedience, we may impose upon ourselves imaginary duties, and allow them to take the place, and occupy the time, belonging to more real duties. But besides that such an error is not common, since he who is eager to obey is not so easily misled, it is one of those to which God himself is indulgent. It is the stubble

or wood which the fire will consume, but without injuring the foundation on which these ephemeral works have been built. The vow of the sons of Rechab, who interdicted themselves and their posterity from using wine, was not in accordance with any precept, or even any principle of the law of God. Perhaps the vow was injudicious; perhaps there was little wisdom in laying an obligation not only on the living, but on posterity yet unborn. Yet the children of Rechab were blessed, and the Almighty declared "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever." Jer. xxxv. 19. The thing which the Lord blessed on this occasion is one which he always blesses, and without which nothing can be blessed—obedience. The Rechabites thought that they were fulfilling a duty. The Rechabites had obeyed. It seems as if God was unwilling to look farther; the principle of obedience is so precious, so fundamental, so easily neglected, that God, when he meets with it, does not inquire too strictly into the form in which it has been realized. He does not quarrel captiously, if I dare so speak, with regard to the garb of the principle, for in his eyes, as in those of sound sense, "the body is more than raiment;" and as the abstinence which the Rechabites prescribed to themselves had nothing bad in itself, he blesses it, judging that obedience cannot be too much encouraged, nor the scruples of obedience handled too tenderly.

But to do what God does not ask, and just because he does not ask it, to enter a certain path because he has not pointed to it, to go beyond his commandment in order to be, if possible, no longer under his jurisdiction, to prescribe to one's self difficult duties in order to have the pleasure of obeying one's self; this will-worship, as St. Paul designates it, is not the worship of God, but that of an idol. This idol is the human self; which, broken in conscience by the cross of Jesus Christ, persists, broken as it is, in raising itself, and

risks the higher the lower its fall. Perfidious suggestions of the indestructible enemy ! how many souls have ye not carried back to the world by the path of an extraordinary devotion and refined piety ; led back to the world merely by your having subjected them to the illegitimate empire of *self* ; but led back to the world in all senses, be it ever remembered, because it is impossible to place *self* again upon the throne without suffering all the consequences of this unhappy restoration ; because it is impossible for him who wishes to do only his own will ever to do any other will than that ; because it is impossible for the natural man, when renewed, to content himself with the food with which a fantastical and arbitrary devotion presents him ; because it is impossible for the ordinary passions of the animal man to be vanquished in a soul which is not submissive ; because, in fine, the interests of a spirituality which may suffice for a soul united to God by an obedience full of love, or by a love full of obedience, cannot suffice for an unregenerate soul, which in these severe practices of devotion, and this assiduous service of God, has really sought only itself. This soul, however it may seem, has not come out from the world ; and perhaps the only difference between it and souls confessed to be worldly is, that though as near danger as any of them, it thinks itself much farther off.

To pass now to the second watchword of the partisans of imaginary perfection—*Humility*. There is a true and there is a false humility. By the latter we understand not hypocritical humility, or a voluntary disguise of *pride*, but a humility which deceives itself in making a wrong choice of its object. For though it is true that we cannot humble ourselves too much, this does not hold true of every kind of abasement ; and he who humbles himself, but not before God, or in the name of God, humbles himself unseasonably. I say more ; it is due to God himself, it is due to the princi-

ple which leads us to humble ourselves before him, not to humble ourselves to any other. If every Christian is ready to acknowledge himself the "chief of sinners;" if every Christian, looking upon each of his brethren as more excellent than himself, seeks the lowest place more willingly than the first, no Christian will prostrate his dignity of man and Christian before a title, a fortune, or a name. On the contrary, we may recognize the Christian by the modest nobleness of his mien and the meek freedom of his speech in presence of the noble and powerful of the world. He who is intimidated by the show of grandeur, the lustre of human glory, or even superiority of talent and knowledge; he who sees in a man, without being able to say what, any thing else than a man; he who in presence of one of the favorites of nature or fortune demeans himself by the demonstration of a servile obsequiousness; he, if he is a Christian, conceals it very carefully; or rather, to speak correctly, what he conceals so carefully is nothing. You have no difficulty in admitting this, brethren. But you are perhaps saying to yourselves that this is not the question, for how could you mistake the voluntary abasement of man before man for religion, far less for the perfection of religion? No, certainly; but the principle which places a man at the feet of a man may place him at the feet of an angel, a saint, a martyr, or her whom "all ages will call blessed." By means of an ill-advised humility, you may transfer to others that glory which God has declared that he will not give to another. Because some one among the children of men appears to have been made more excellent than ourselves, and has, perhaps, in fact been so, we place him, by our homage, by the side of that jealous God beside whom none should be placed. Is this a simple error? Do we gain nothing (at least according to the natural man) by thus humbling ourselves? Are these pretended middlemen, whom we place between



ourselves and God, a means of communicating or a means of dispensing with him? Is it for the sake of the Spirit or the sake of the flesh that, not content with the only Mediator who has been given us, we place between ourselves and him other mediators, not only less powerful, (of this we are well aware,) but also less holy; who, if they do not represent to us all grace, cannot represent the whole law, and in disparaging Jesus Christ as a Saviour, disparage him as a Law-giver and King? But methinks, brethren, I hear you saying, Go and tell this to our brethren of the Romish Church; it is not applicable to us, who, like yourself, look with pity on all that mythology which they have ingrafted upon the Gospel. Though it should apply directly only to them, it applies indirectly to you as men; for this error is a human error, which your fathers shared, which you yourselves would share if you had been born in the bosom of that church, and which she has derived from the very source from which you derive all your errors. But is it true that you are perfect strangers to this false or mistaken humility? We must allow you to judge.

As we are speaking only of those who affect a perfection superior to that of which the Gospel has traced the image, and not of those who seek pretences for falling short of this model, we have not to discourse to you of that perfidious and fatal humility which leads some to refuse the grace of the Gospel, because they say they are unworthy of it; as if any one could be worthy of a favor, and as if the very idea of grace did not imply unworthiness! We speak here, with St. Paul, of those who wish to bid upon Christianity, and who, as if Christianity did not humble them sufficiently, look curiously around them for some other subject of contrition, or some other means of self-abasement. In truth, if St. Paul was entitled to say to the Athenians that he found them too superstitious, we might say of those persons that

they are too humble; for the lowest degree of abasement does not satisfy them, and one might say that they seek a place lower than the lowest. But do they know, or do they not know, that beyond every thing there is nothing, and there cannot be a void in a void, and that any thing beyond humility is not humility, but falsehood or meanness? Without insisting on the last epithet, let us fix on that of falsehood; and be it, if you will, falsehood altogether involuntary. If it is humility to confess "that we are conceived and born in sin, inclined to evil, incapable in ourselves of any good," is it also humility to persuade ourselves that we are mere nothing before God, not only in works and feelings, but even in nature; and that God absorbs us incessantly, just as we at each inhalation absorb the air which surrounds us? If it is humility as well as reason to acknowledge that God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts, is it also humility to interdict ourselves from judging of his dispensations according to the ideas of goodness and justice which he has placed within us, and thereafter, notwithstanding, exhort one another to admire those very dispensations; as if we could admire them without applying some kind of measure to them? If it is humility to declare that we are saved by grace, absolutely by grace, and that whatever goodness is in us is implanted by God; is it also humility to look as with indifference on all that passes within us and on all we do that we may be able, we say, to maintain the doctrine of free grace unimpaired? If it is humility to depend only on the strength of God, and acknowledge that "when we are weak, then are we strong," is it also humility to interdict ourselves from every voluntary act, to lose ourselves in a passive and beatific contemplation, and to wait till God impels us to do his will; when it must be acknowledged that the first impulse from God is that which urges to *seek* his will? If it is humility to believe ourselves as blind as weak,

and to expect from God counsel as well as strength, is it also humility to renounce the use of our reason, to ask for signs in the heavens and on the earth, as if conscience were not the first of signs? Are we, in fine, to employ the word of God, if I may so express it, as a kind of divination? If it is humility to acknowledge that this human intellect, which, according to Scripture, is a divine lamp, penetrating to the greatest depths, is at the same time, as regards salvation, blind, and incapable of finding the true path; is it also humility to despise it where it is not to be despised, and, under pretext of the abuses which have been made of them, to neglect talents of which, like all others, we shall be required to give account? If it is humility to acknowledge that "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination before God," if it is humility to acknowledge that in the kingdom of God the first will be last, is it also humility to confide without discernment to ignorant or feeble intellects, only because they have faith, the most delicate spiritual interests, and the government of the Church of Christ? It is by making us in all these things outrage humility that the enemy, in order to lay waste our field, introduces into it a thousand other enemies, and among them even pride. And *even* pride! Should we not say, and more *especially* pride? For no qualities harmonize more than false humility and pride. Add spiritual indolence, sectarianism, and fanaticism, and you will still have an incomplete list of the evils which follow in the train of this dangerous illusion.

The absence of all indulgence towards the flesh is the last of the traits which give to false perfection an appearance of wisdom. No pretext, it must be acknowledged, is more specious. That instrument with which our soul was provided in order to manifest itself to others, and also to itself, and in order to correspond with the sensible world, which is at once the object and the theatre of its activity; this instru-

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ment, I say, for the body is nothing else, has failed to fulfil its purpose. And while in all other beings obedient and docile matter reproduces exactly the idea of which it is the form, the human body seems to have violated the stipulations of the contract which associated it with the soul. It *seems*, I say, for in itself it is neither docile nor indocile. The soul, when it ceased to be united to the Father of spirits, rushed down a declivity, at the top of which it previously stood, God alone detaining it. It slid down, if we may so speak, from the world of spirit to the world of matter; from the sphere of principles, or of reason, towards the sphere of instinct; the external sense becoming more active in proportion as the perceptions of the internal sense (which may be called the sense of divine things) became less frequent or more confused. And no one, brethren, no one knows to what degradations it would descend, did not divine pity, alas! did not pride detain it in its descent. For it must not be forgotten that the first sin was a sin of pride; and pride, inimical as it is to God, does not consent to every species of abasement. On the contrary, it often produces a shuddering abhorrence of abasement. In fine, however, the equilibrium has been destroyed; the body, our ancient servant, is now only an enemy which conquers or is conquered, but it is still an enemy. Or rather, the body has changed its master. It always serves, but instead of serving the mind it serves the flesh. Yes, the *body* serves the *flesh*, for the flesh and the body are not the same thing. They are often distinguished from each other in the Gospel; they are so in our text, in which St. Paul shows us the partisans of a fictitious holiness, treating the *body* with harshness for fear of flattering the *flesh*. The body or the members which we ought, according to St. Paul's expression, to make the servants of righteousness and holiness, (Rom. vi. 19,) are, under the orders of the flesh or animal principle, the servants of im-

purity and unrighteousness. The body, then, is a servant to be restored to its true master, who is the Spirit; but the true enemy of the Spirit is the flesh; and, accordingly, in the Gospel it is not the body but the flesh which is condemned; for, as St. Paul says, it is with the flesh, not with the body, that we serve the law of sin. Rom. vii. 25. Jesus Christ, clothed mysteriously with this thoroughly and universally tainted flesh, has condemned sin in the flesh, (Rom. viii. 3,) although he had overcome it, although, as he himself has said, the world had nothing in him. John xiv. 30. On the cross he ratified the malediction of the flesh, by giving to destruction his pure and innocent body united to this same flesh or animal principle, to which he never granted any thing. It was because he represented the whole body of mankind, whose flesh has been cursed, and who never could have known, or have been willing to believe, that in order to live to the Spirit it is necessary to die to the flesh, had not Jesus Christ, as man, proclaimed the universal and irrevocable malediction of the flesh.

After this, all was clear. It was known that the flesh must die; on no other terms could a man be a Christian. It was known that those who are Christ's have (both by anticipation and in principle) crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts, (Gal. v. 24,) and that they are bound to be always sacrificing it anew. But a class of men arose, who, wishing to be better Christians than Jesus Christ, extended to the body what ought to be understood only of the flesh, and inferred the destruction of the body from that of the flesh. Here, brethren, mistake was easy. The flesh is united to the body, and it is impossible, in certain cases, to assail the flesh without wounding the body. They confounded them, and because Jesus Christ had condemned the flesh they condemned the body. This mistake was not new, and is not even peculiar to the Christian Church. It, on the contrary, belongs to

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all times, and is universal. The voice of conscience and experience had denounced the flesh as a great enemy, but it was not seen that behind it is a greater enemy, of whom account should be taken ; it was not seen that the soul was the true culprit, and the body, the organism attached to the service of the spirit, was unjustly accused of being the principle and author of the evil. Many sects declared inveterate war against it, and saw no remedy for the great evil which they were forced to confess, except in a suicide more or less prolonged. Christianity, although it has been assailed by this error, is far from sanctioning it ; if you compare it with other religions you will find that it has restored the body to its proper place. Christianity has never represented the body as a tyrannical and troublesome appendage to the mind, but as an essential part of man. Christianity has honored the body by inviting it to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Christianity has honored our members by destining them, as I have already observed, to be instruments, and, so to speak, weapons of righteousness and holiness. Christianity, in fine, admits the glorified body to share in the destiny of the glorified spirit, and therefore cannot have declared war against it.

What it has done is this : it has condemned the flesh as a principle of sin ; but not being able to separate the flesh from the body, these being both two and one, it behooved to consent that the body should in certain cases suffer what the flesh suffered. The sword of the executioner, in beheading the martyrs, condemned sin in their flesh, but at the same time destroyed their body. The zeal of faith, another sword, another flame, prematurely in the Apostle's case, wears out the bodily strength which a more moderate activity and longer intervals of repose might have maintained some years longer. But in these cases the destruction of the body is not sought on its own account, is not the end in view, and truly never is the aim of the Christian. He preserves his body to employ

it, and how often even does he preserve it by employing it! If the Christian spares it not, it is because God so wills; if he in general treats it rigorously, if he keeps it in subjection, it is because in this body there is a sinful flesh, which it is necessary to treat harshly and keep under; but he does not go beyond this, for it is not permitted him to destroy the temple of the Holy Spirit; and the harshness, or rather severity, more or less strict, with which he treats his body, never, except in the extraordinary cases of which we have spoken, goes so far as to destroy, or even weaken the bodily strength, of which, as of other gifts, he must give account. As the result of the whole, we conclude that worldlings destroy their bodies, and Christians preserve them.

This is a distinction which those whose error is reprov'd by our text, do not know or will not make. And it is true that if they wished to go beyond the spirit of evangelical mortification, they had no other method. In confining themselves to the exact terms of the evangelical principle, which was the mortification of the flesh, and not the destruction of the body, it was impossible for them to go further than the Gospel in the applying it. They could have said nothing which it had not said, and practised nothing which it at least had not suggested. If, according to the Gospel, the Christian is called to nothing less than to crucify the flesh, what more would these Christians have? We cannot conceive it. But, on quitting those limits, they have an open field before them. There is neither end nor truce to bodily and mental suffering. We may, according to the degree of exaltation to which we have attained, rise to the horrible, or, as such Christians will have it, to the sublime; and as perfection is the common rule, it is clear that if this perfection is real, the Church will, in its proper state, be only an establishment of tortures as unmeasured as unmeaning, a true field of carnage; and the infidel will for once be entitled to reproach

the Christian with his religion of blood. But what matters it? In this perpetual and general immolation, a single victim will have been forgotten; the will of the natural man, *self*, alone will have been spared. It alone will live in the midst of this death, it alone will triumph in this field of destruction; and this great battle, waged apparently against it alone, will have left it alone unscathed.

You will not surely refer to the example of your Master, as giving his innocent flesh to his murderers. You will leave this quibble to the enemies of the Gospel; but when they say that the religion of Jesus Christ is an enemy to life, society, and nature, beware of giving them ground to say it by your conduct. They would be wrong, but you would be responsible; it would be you who had fastened this deplorable conclusion on the leading fact of the Gospel. Or would you, in fact, reason thus; would you think that because Jesus Christ left his life in the hands of the wicked, or because Jesus Christ sealed with his blood the letters of pardon which he came to deliver you, you ought, without an object, (for not having his, you have none,) you ought to fill your life with idle privations and fruitless pains? Is not this the opposite of what you ought to think? Ought you not to consider that what may apply to Jesus Christ is not applicable to you, and that your task is confined to these two things—to crucify the flesh of sin, and offer your body to God a holy and living sacrifice; in other words, to devote them to his service for all that the interest of his kingdom and the welfare of your brethren may demand? This, says the Apostle, is your reasonable service; but beyond it is there any thing reasonable, any thing evangelical, any thing useful, any thing holy? What can you say in favor of your practices, unless you say that you wish to expiate your sins? So be it; but if you would expiate them, know that after all the sufferings to which your flesh may be subjected, you will still be far from *gaining* your point.



On seeing you multiplying works of supererogation, one is tempted to think that you must have got over the field of your more immediate obligations at a rapid pace. Will you allow me to say it?—If you had been careful not to enter the second field before you had well ascertained the extent of the first, you would never have entered it at all; if you had known that the first task is infinite, you would never have once thought of a second. Now, rest assured that the first is infinite. Ignorance of this is the source of your error, or the cause of your persisting in it. And if you are ignorant of this, it is because you have not yet understood this Gospel which you wish to perfect. Yes, the crucifixion of the flesh and its lusts (without adding to it destruction of the body, which is only a suicide,) is of itself alone an infinite task; and as love only can measure it, so love only dares to undertake it. To love, it is fair and attractive, and of thrilling interest; for the sacrifices of which it consists have for their result glory to God and love to man. At the same time, it is infinite. If you knew this you never would have gone farther. You would not have been seen running after those painful refinements, those cruel attempts at pretended perfection, while grossly neglecting duties of which you are capable, and sacrifices placed within your reach. For it has been observed a hundred times that simple men, who do not even understand the technical terms of your spirituality, discharge their nearest and most essential duties more regularly and more completely than you do. You can do the greatest, and cannot do the least; you can fly, and yet you cannot walk!

Who bids you run so far in search of your cross? It stands at your door. Why prosecute the innocent when the criminal is in your power? This innocent is your body, this criminal your flesh, I mean the old man with all his passions. Such is the victim which is delivered to you, and whom you

ought to be always immolating. No one bids you seek for torments. In this you are not following the spirit of the Gospel, in which you read that the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them. Luke ix. 56. Without seeking suffering, you will find it the task which is laid upon you. To subdue, in a single instance, any one of your favorite passions, to eradicate a single darling habit, to renounce, from humility or disinterestedness, the employment of any one of your powers, to allow others to pass you or to intercept occasions which natural inclination disposes you eagerly to seize; in a word, to trample upon sin in proportion as it seeks to rise, to press with all your force and all your weight against the doors which that prisoner is attempting to force, to have your eye, your arm, your mind, incessantly intent on this sole end—has this single act, though wholly negative, silent, and defensive, has this immovable energy of a slave who grasps in his chains and, after a long struggle, strangles a slave of his own who was incessantly revolting,—has it any known limit? has it any other end than that of life? Your choice is the best in a natural point of view. For, supposing that you suffer as much, and even more than ordinary Christians, your sufferings are of your own choice. To suffer in this way is to act; and who knows not what secret enjoyment there is in action and liberty? Those, on the contrary, whose example I propose to you, always accept and never choose; they do not go purposely to meet any useless pains, but they submit to all useful pains; they never command, they always obey; and when the world, which knows them not, imagines, on seeing their struggles, that they seek suffering, it is mistaken. No; they sought only duty, and have found suffering in the path of duty. Their suffering, then, is not action, but suffering merely; and how much does this single circumstance raise their sufferings above yours! Once more, do you seek suf-

ferings? Try this latter kind. Do you seek your cross? It is at your door.

You will tell me that love transforms every thing, makes every thing supportable. I was going to say so. God forbid I should see the whole truth in the mournful picture which I have just drawn! God forbid I should forget that the joy of the Christian revives and flourishes again like the palm amid those waters of bitterness! Yes, love transforms every thing; but forget not that so far from sparing a single one of those sacrifices, it multiplies them. Love transforms every thing, it is true; but pride also transforms every thing. Think well of this, and fear lest pride be the true charm of your pains. How just this fear is in regard to courted chosen sufferings, where *self* triumphs by annihilating itself, and dies, so to speak, only to rise again more lovely and strong! Allow us, by a single example, to explain our whole thought. Which of the two, think you, suffers most in his pride—he who makes publicly, particularly, and repeatedly, a humiliating confession which was not asked of him, or he who, aside and in private, allows himself to be reproved by one of his equals, by one of his inferiors, one of whom he perhaps thought himself the natural guide and censor? Which of the two do you think more humble—he who anticipates censure by inflicting it on himself, or he who endures it without anticipating it? Well, in these two men you have the representation of these two classes of Christians; the one accepting all trials but seeking none, and the other seeking a thousand and a thousand trials but accepting none. The former has a just idea of Christian perfection, the latter pursues an imaginary perfection; the one is within the terms of the Gospel, and the other not. Moreover, they have each their recompense and their consolation; the one pride, the other love. *Omnes acceperunt mercedem suam : vani vanam.*

After all that we have said, may you still expect (suppos-

ing you have not read the Gospel) to find precepts in it enjoining this pretended and spurious mortification? Not at all, brethren; and in order that this silence may not deceive you, St. Paul, so to speak, gives it a voice and makes it articulate in the words preceding the text, when he says, that such ordinances (he means the prohibition of certain meats) are founded only on the doctrines and commandments of men. Nay, more, even if these observances had a better principle, St. Paul is not more favorable to them, for he says that they perish in the using. Not that he condemns certain abstinences which our Lord himself seems to have authorized, when these are used as exercises, or as a means of finding more leisure for the duties of worship; but seeing in all selected sufferings a pretext for avoiding sufferings enjoined, and a kind of hidden path by which the new man may return towards the traditions of the old, he rather warns us of the danger, than establishes the legitimacy and advantages of them. What Jeremiah, in the name of the Lord, had said of an idolatrous worship, St. Paul seems not to hesitate to say of this other idolatry: "I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind." Jer. xix. 5. Paul was well entitled to speak thus. It was with him as with the brave soldier who, covered with honorable wounds, may decline a challenge. He might tell his companions in arms, to reserve their blood for the fields of battle on which he had bled. From the bosom of a comfortable and indolent life, he might not have been able with a good grace to decry those pious excesses. He might have been personally wrong, though theoretically right. But with what authority were not these warnings invested by a life wholly consecrated to struggles against sin, and against the world; a life full of sacrifices, useful sacrifices, a life of fatigue, of privation, of peril, of opprobrium and bitterness, each of which had its reason and object; a perpetual crucifixion, not only of the lusts of the

old man, but of the affections which are not forbidden to the new man ; a painful travail from the world to the Gospel, a daily death, an hourly cross ! Ah ! how few since his day have treated the same subject with the same authority ; and well may his successors in the ministry have a blush on their foreheads, when they come like him to protest against excesses of which they are only too innocent. Nevertheless it is necessary to do so ; but it is necessary to say to one's self, and to say to all, that if a false mortification is dangerous, the want of mortification is still more so ; that if temerity is culpable, still more culpable is laxity.

Brethren, we have condemned the fantastic perfection of the Christian life, in the principles on which it is founded. But it has been careful by its manifestations to condemn itself. Its works and efforts condemn it. The history of the different schools which it has created is intimately associated with the most distressing trials and the worst affronts which the Christian Church has undergone. Follow its destination, trace it over a series of ages, and see what ruins it leaves behind.

And first, under the pretext of raising Christianity above itself, if I may so speak, it has always lowered and degraded it. This behoved to be. As beyond all there is nothing, as no addition can be made to what is infinite, it inevitably follows that whatever pretends to add to the truth does not unite with it but oppose, does not augment but diminish it. For inasmuch as the law is complete, inasmuch as God has commanded all that was worthy of himself and good for man, we may boldly conclude that whatever he has not commanded, he has forbidden. If under the old dispensation, condemnation fell equally on him who took away from the commandment of God, and him who added to it, (Deut. xii. 32,) this was only a sign and warning to the members of the new covenant. The error which we combat was fore-

seen : the same principle which carried imperfect obedience at one of its poles, must have carried at the other fantastic perfection, or human invention. If this perfection were not according to truth, it must be contrary to truth ; if it added nothing to true perfection, it could only diminish it ; if it did not complete Christianity, it could only mutilate it. The principle being a principle of infidelity, the results behooved to correspond and be similar to the principle, and a false perfection makes way for too many real imperfections. And this is what has been seen. Christ has been disparaged in all manners by this infidel fervor, disparaged in his nature, his dignity, his necessity, his purity, and holiness. There is not one of those schools which, by stretching certain cords to excess, have not in an equal degree slackened others which ought to have been kept stretched. There is not one of those schools whose progress has not been marked by the destruction or weakening of some one of the fundamental truths of religion or morality. So that were it true that the partisans of these schools had, in so far as they are personally concerned, found in their ideal perfection the true perfection of Christianity, yet as a smaller circle is contained within a greater, and as less is contained in more, (we do not admit that this applies to them,) so it is true that the superfluity thus enjoyed by them, would have deprived the multitude of their necessary subsistence, that their luxury, like that of avaricious despots, would have been the result of public misery. For if it is not possible for them to carry up the people to their sublime heights, it is only too possible to make the people embrace errors which are as much akin to laxity as to elevation ; it is but too easy for them to accredit heresies which, appearing compatible with the highest degree of fervor, are still more compatible with the avowed mediocrity to which the great body of Christians are reduced. Yes, those enervating, stupefying, nauseating errors, which

gradually bring down Christianity to the level of worldly morality, are, whatever may seem to the contrary, the errors which have been propagated by these wrong-headed, fervent enthusiasts. Advantage has been taken of their zeal to embrace convenient errors, while their zeal itself, well or ill understood, has been allowed to remain with them. The art has been discovered of extracting lax doctrines from their devotion. The poisonous fruit has been appropriated, but its outer covering has been thrown away.

And it is not merely the truths of the Gospel that these sectaries have altered; they have done violence to truths which, though not taught *verbatim* in the Gospel, are not less sacred, because the Gospel presupposes them, in the same way as in a house the foundation is not seen just because it is the foundation, and gives support to the whole. These first affections, these eternal instincts of nature, without which life is not human life, and man not man, and which, in indulgence to our weakness, if we may so speak, portion out the invisible scale by which our soul rises to its supreme object into spaces of moderate dimensions,—these affections, these instincts they have denied, and, as much as in them lay, have destroyed. That in this way immense damage has been done to religion, considered in itself, is a fact which cannot be doubted by true philosophers, who have at all times recognized two truths of equal importance, the one that the Gospel and the Gospel alone brings us back to nature, and the other that the Gospel deals with actual complete men, not with phantoms under the name of men—that it is impossible to be truly a Christian without being truly a man—and that faith produces real and good fruits only in souls unsophistically human. No service therefore is done to Christianity by denying man or a part of his nature, as these theological systems do; for this is to make a change in his essence, and moreover to degrade him.

The world, brethren, is only too much indisposed to receive the Gospel in its simplicity, but still when it is exhibited to them as it really is, they cannot help perceiving and acknowledging its beauty and excellence, in other words, involuntarily admitting that it is true. How culpable or how unfortunate then are those whose arbitrary inventions mar this distinct feature, and who, by disfiguring the truth, furnish its enemies with a means of mistaking, and a pretext for denying it! Will it not be dreadful one day for each individual, when his eyes are opened, to be obliged to say to himself, "By reason" of me "the way of truth" was "evil spoken of?" 2 Pet. ii. 2. By covering it up either with briars or flowers, I hid it; and men, no longer discerning it, pretended that it did not exist. Because the enemy could say as he pointed to the phantom of my imagination, Behold the Gospel! how many simple souls have been turned aside from the Gospel, and after a longer or shorter time have finally pined away, and perished far from this stream of living water! Is not this a most deplorable result of my rashness and presumption, and though I find in the heart of God mercy enough to wipe away my fault, how shall I find in my eyes tears enough to weep for it!

In fine, brethren, we must say that these systems of arbitrary perfection have spoken loudly against themselves by the lapses of their followers. St. James says, "In many things we offend all;" (James iii. 2;) every being does, even the Christian; for, until the end of his days he travels in company with the enemy; and were the moral infallibility of those who profess a doctrine an indispensable mark of its truth, Christianity itself would not be true. But it is with eternal truth as with eternal necessity, pride goes before destruction, and the higher a man exalts himself, the more will he be abased. Let the height to which these rash spirits



rise, be the measure by which you anticipate the depth of their fall. The worldling may fall as low, but the height being less, he is not so completely shattered, and his bruises may be cured. The Christian who, as St. Paul expresses it, wishes not to "think of himself more highly than he ought to think," (Rom. xii. 3,) rather sinks than falls, and has not reached the ground when his Father's hand lifts him up. But it is not so with him who, persisting in making perfection perfect, and interrogating his Creator, dares to ask, "What makest thou? He hath no hands:" with him "that saith unto his Father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?" Isa. xlv. 9, 10. It has been maintained, not without good cause, that the spirit of evil takes up his abode most readily with the lover of the extraordinary in religion; and the wicked spirit which had gone out, returns with seven other spirits more wicked than himself into a house thus richly furnished. Matthew xii. 44, 45. None have ever produced more deplorable scandals in the Church than those fantastic, heady spirits; no road ever led to a more profound abyss. This, dear brethren, is so true, that the dignity of this place, and the pulpit, absolutely prevents us from giving full proof of the assertion, proof as overwhelming as it is disgraceful. What a powerful motive to value and respect the Apostle's recommendation, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate?" Rom. xii. 16.

In order to escape the perils of a false elevation, as well as answer to the designs and gifts of your Creator, to avoid falling either into the snares of the flesh or the snares of pride, aspire to things higher than all those to which the world or sectarians unjustly give the name of high things. Neither to the right nor to the left, but upward! upward! I mean, in the practice of all the duties which God has given you to fulfil. Upward! in simple love to him who has loved

you, diligently seeking his glory while despising your own. Upward! in the exactness, not the scrupulous and legal, but the tender and zealous exactness of Christian obedience, in humility truly humble, and that childlike simplicity which accords, so admirably accords, with enlightened reason in the intelligent but docile acceptance of the gifts which God has given, and the truths which he has taught you. Do not seek a mean between two extremes in discriminating truth from error, but raise yourself to a height from which you no longer perceive any middle, any intervening space between two errors, which thus become, in your eyes, only one error, or one sin under two forms. Look down upon both from the high vantage-ground of Christian simplicity. And first, ask of God that invaluable simplicity from which some are so remote, and others are kept away by so many conspiring causes. O, how beautiful! O, how rare and difficult this simplicity! O, how difficult it must in fact be, since it is nothing else than faithfulness, nothing else than faith. O how we ought to ask and continue asking it of God, in order that at last, as regards both Him and ourselves, we may have no thoughts but his thoughts! May we at least have the simplicity to ask, since it has been so solemnly promised, that he who asks shall receive, and he who seeks shall find!

## THE STONES OF THE TEMPLE.

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"As for these things which ye behold," or (according to the French translation,) "Is it this you are looking at?"—LUKE xxi. 6.

THESE words contain a reproof, a reproof which, from having no bitterness in it, thereby becomes only the more serious and impressive. The disciples had gone with Jesus Christ into the temple, where, struck with the splendor and magnificence of the edifice, which however was no novelty to them, instead of being contented with silent admiration, addressed their Master and called upon him to join in their admiration by exclaiming, What stones! What buildings! Jesus merely replies, "Is it this you are looking at?" the day will come when it will be thrown down, and not one stone will be left upon another.

Were any one of you tempted to make an excuse for the disciples, he might say: If those who built this temple, and adorned it with beautiful stones and ornaments were not to blame, no more were the disciples to blame for admiring their work. The first point is to determine if it was proper that such an edifice should be beautiful; but, if so, it is

certain that beauty is designed to be felt. It is a natural impression which, to those who are properly organized, is irresistible; and the builders of this edifice had neglected nothing by which the eye, on entering the threshold of this sanctuary, might be at once surprised and delighted. We might also be reminded that this temple, built by Herod on the site of that of Zerubbabel, in grandeur if not in magnificence and glory surpassed the second, and even the first temple. We might be called to view it from the highest of three terraces connected with each other by magnificent steps, and formed into courts by a double and treble row of pillars. We might be shown above those peristyles rising one over the other a last peristyle, which was properly the court of the sanctuary. Beyond this last forest of pillars we might be introduced into the temple itself, whose walls, a hundred cubits high, and broad in proportion, were throughout covered with precious marble, and shining with the lustre of pure gold. We might be made to traverse in thought those lateral buildings, those vast courts, raising their treble stories around the sacred inclosure, and arranged like the first temple, but in enlarged proportions, the better to disguise, shall I say, or to render more impressive the desolation of the holy of holies, now absolutely naked and empty, and no longer mysterious. How could such grandeur, such lustre, the mere description of which stirs our imagination, fail to produce an effect on the imagination of the disciples, and shall we not excuse them when they exclaim, Master, what stones! what buildings! what magnificence!

Is there any one Christian, however austere, who, on entering the body of our cathedral, not for the first time but the twentieth, and allowing his eye to wander along its avenue of columns, or into the depth at once so mysterious, and so impressive of the distant choir; or towards those arches, at once light and bold, which, like a vigorous vege-

tation on each pilaster, throw out and intertwine their stems at the centre—is there any one who has not said to himself, How beautiful this is! what harmony! what unison among all these stones! what music in this architecture! what poetry in this edifice! Those who reared it are dead, but though dead they still speak to us; and their conception, full of adoration, their conception, a species of prayer, is so united to their work, that we think we feel it and breathe it as we advance within these walls, which carry us over a vista of ages. Such is our feeling; and if we are not alone, we can scarcely help giving it utterance. Thus, doing what the disciples did when they exclaimed, What stones! what buildings! might we not hear ourselves addressed by our Lord in words of reproof, “Is it this you are looking at?”

And why should we not be reproofed if our soul goes no farther than our eye, if it stops where our eye is obliged to stop; if symbols, appearances, visible things, hold it captive; if the splendors of art chain down our heart to the earth instead of raising it to heaven? This is the censure which Jesus Christ passes on his disciples. He had looked into their souls, and there detected that lust of the flesh, that lust of the eye, and that pride of life, which are the three connecting chains by which the enemy of God links us closely to outer darkness. The man and the Jew were equally revealed by that involuntary exclamation; man, dazzled by whatever is seen, and filled with contempt for what is not seen; the Jew, proud of the exterior pomp of a worship, the deep meaning and internal idea of which had long escaped him, and attaching himself obstinately to the law—in other words, a shadow, at the very moment when this law was more than ever a shadow. Is it this you are looking at? What! these few grains of dust, which are large only because you are little? What! these gifts extorted by fear, vanity, and custom, from individuals who refused to begin

by giving themselves to God? What! the gorgeous falsehood of these marbles and gildings, of all those ornaments, the pious import of which has long since been forgotten? Is it this you are looking at?

Besides, a circumstance to which I scarcely require to call your attention, gave a special seasonableness to our Lord's reproof. He also, on coming out of the temple, had looked at something, and mentioned it to his disciples, who otherwise would have given no heed to it. What was it that attracted the eye and fixed the attention of our Master? It was a poor woman putting her mite into the alms-box: in other words, giving of her necessity to relieve the necessities. Jesus Christ had called the attention of his disciples to this act of liberality—a liberality greater in his estimation than the most abundant donations of the rich. It was when he had brought under their view this touching example of charity, and when by an expression as simple as striking he had opened this fine subject for meditation; it was then, as if to answer one observation by another, that the disciples invite their Master to join them in admiring the magnificence of the temple. It was as if they meant to say, That is what you judged worthy of your attention, and this is what we judge worthy of ours. You looked at a simple individual making a sacrifice, we are looking at buildings. Moral grandeur and beauty are the spectacle which you love; material grandeur and beauty the spectacle which pleases us. A single act of this worship, which you have called worship in Spirit and in truth, withdraws you from the splendor of the external worship performed within these precincts, while this visible splendor carries our eye far away from the worship in Spirit and in truth, which alone our Father honors. And not only does our instinct lead us in a different direction from you, but even your admonition does not bring us back. You have told us what ought to be admired, and we answer, this is what we admire.

To these words, or at least to these thoughts, Jesus replied, "Is it this you are looking at?" Might he not have added something more? Had he deemed it proper, on how many grounds might he not have rebuked both the inattention and prejudice of the disciples? But our Lord was sparing of words, and did not argue. Usually one word, one reason for all, sufficed him, but it was a peremptory, decisive word, reaching, as has been said of the Divine word in general, to the last division of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow. He makes only one observation, and it is this: "The days will come when there will not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down."

He is obviously speaking of an instantaneous, violent, forcible destruction, and not that which years and ages insensibly accomplish. This destruction is to be the work of an enemy more impatient than time; and as no person can imagine that this temple is to be demolished by the people who reared it, who glory in it, and regard it as the centre of their nationality, he must be speaking of another people, of an invasion, a conquest. This single expression thus opens to the minds of the disciples a perspective of disgrace, ruin, and desolation. This expression perhaps contains a prediction of the total extermination of the Jewish people and Jewish name. The Divine prophet is silent only on one point: he does not say when these things will happen. "The days will come," says he, but soon after giving full scope to the prophecy which is thrilling in his breast, he clearly reveals to their agonized hearts that the period is not distant, that they are personally interested in it, and that this temple, though still recent among monuments, having been built within fifty years, will not see fifty more.

But though the destruction of the temple should not imply the ruin of the country and extermination of the people, and though nothing of all this might be imminent, the reply of

Jesus would not be the less full of meaning and force. Let us admit that the destruction of the temple was to be the slow and silent work of years, it is nevertheless true that in mentioning to his hearers a circumstance which they already knew too well, namely, that one day not a stone of this magnificent edifice will remain upon another, our Lord fully justifies his equally grave and mild reproof, "Is it this you are looking at?"

An admirable and most comprehensive argument! Truth and eternity are inseparable, and so are error and frailty. Whatever is true, is eternal; whatever is not eternal, has only a semblance and a name. God has made all that appears out of that which appeared not. Spirit, of which God is the centre, existed before matter, without matter; matter existed only to serve as an instrument to the created spirit, as a form to its life, an object to its activity. But it has no intrinsic absolute value; it derives all that it has from its end, and employment. The spirit alone, offspring of God, like to God, capable of uniting itself to God, the spirit alone is immortal, because worthy of being so. A single spirit is worth whole worlds: or rather all worlds, actual and possible, cannot be compared or measured with a single spirit. The spirit alone deserves of itself the chief attention of man, because it has obtained the chief attention of God, and inasmuch as the spirit and all which pertains to it is invisible, it may be said with truth, that invisible things only deserve to be looked at, and that in a certain sense we should be blind to every thing else.

And this is the reason why this widow's mite, which had noiselessly dropped into the alms-box, deserved more attention than the stones and ornaments of the temple. It was not a mite, but an invisible act of the mind which the alms had made visible. There was something great in this action, greater than the temple, with its stairs, its peristyles, its



arches, and colossal walls. And indeed all comparison is injurious. The disciples may if they please compare the idea which raised the temple, with that which made the mite drop from the widow's hand. But this is far from their thoughts, and though they were to do so, we would admit the comparison only as a means of exalting the widow's conduct ; for between the luxurious prince, who built this house out of the superabundance of his treasure, or the sweat of his subjects slowly transformed into gold, and this poor woman, stealthily throwing in the treasury a tribute levied from her misery, "her whole living," says our Saviour, what a difference ! How great the poor woman ! how little the monarch !

That in the soul of each individual must be sought the proper measure and true name of each of his actions, or in other words, that the acts of the soul are the true actions, is one of those ideas towards which the dominion of sensible objects makes it difficult for us to climb, and to which, however, we must rise, if we would see God and truth from the proper point of view. We confine the name of action exclusively to every employment which makes use of our corporeal powers in order to effect some change without us, and we give the name, not of actions, but thoughts, feelings, desires, to what takes place in our souls, or rather to what our soul does without the concurrence of our corporeal faculties, and without any change in the external world ; so that when we have had some well-defined intention, and obstacles wholly independent of our will have hindered us from realizing it, we do not think that we have acted. And yet not only are these intentions actions, (this is proved by the remorse we feel when they are bad,) but they are even real actions. Our external acts are only the evidence and external manifestation of them, and are in the eye of the Judge of hearts, to whom external changes are of little moment,

only gestures more or less expressive. It is not for what we will have done (taking the word in its literal meaning) that we shall be judged, but for what we have wished, in other words, done internally, that is, for the actions of our soul. It is not said that we shall receive according to what we have done *with* our body, but according to what we shall have done *being in* the body. Our external actions will then appear as symbols, or evidences. It will not be equally the same whether we have done or not done any particular act. For, in the first place, it will prove whether we have withheld such an act, and in the second place, these actions originating within will have reacted for good or evil on our inner being; for good if they were good, and for evil if they were evil. But in every case it is the internal action which will be judged, the heart which will be sifted. Otherwise it would be necessary to admit, that he who, while retaining his internal faculties, had been deprived of all means of action, would not be liable to be judged, and that where one should not have done all the good or evil which he really wished to do, neither this good nor evil will be placed to his account; a supposition which goes no less a length than to abolish all responsibility, and annihilate all morality. Man judges the outward, God judges the inward act; and this is ordinarily expressed by saying that God judges the heart, or looks at the heart. And do not we poor creatures look into it as far as we can? Has it not happened to us a hundred times to correct in ourselves the judgments of a criminal court, by deciding internally, that an individual convicted of a grave crime, is really less guilty, considering the state of his will, than another convicted of a trivial delinquency? Hence, while continuing to give the name of action to that to which the world gives the name, and to distinguish in ordinary language between action and thought, we are authorized to say, that essentially our voluntary thoughts are our true actions, and that our actions are only symbols.

Let us dwell on this idea. Whatever is external, visible, material, is only a symbol ; there is no true action, except in mental acts ; the mind alone performs true actions, and the changes which it produces without in the world of sense, only serve to express it. These also, I admit, are actions, but they are purely symbolical actions, signs of what we feel and what we will, or also means of exerting our inner man ; and herein lies their importance. What we say of our actions must be said of our productions. They do not make us what we are, they merely express it ; they testify it to others and to ourselves. Here their importance stops ; but in order that we may not confound the symbol with the reality, the sign with the thing signified, time successively destroys all these symbols, and whatever they may have expressed. None is spared ; matter follows the laws of matter, dust returns to dust. And this body which is not ourselves, but our form only, this body which is to us the first part of the world of phenomena, the first object as it is the first instrument of our external action, this body changes, perishes, gives way, and reminds us every moment by this continuous decay, this incessant death, that it has in our existence only a subordinate rank and relative importance.

Far from us be the extravagant dreams of those who have called the existence of matter and the reality of the external world into doubt ; far be it from us to treat the phenomena of the universe as mere illusion. Still there is in the conscience of man something which constrains him to unite the idea of being indissolubly with that of immortality ; " what must end," said a great orator, " has scarcely ceased to be nothing." In what way, by what title does any thing exist, that is not to exist always ? Is Scripture mistaken when it says, that " man walketh in a vain show," and are your preachers in like manner mistaken when directing your eye toward the invisible world, they urge you to fix it on the *only realities* ?

No, let us say it boldly : In the religious acceptance of the term, nothing is real that is not eternal. All that we see perish and crumble around us and near us, (and our body is one of the things which are near us,) was not absolutely nothing since even a shadow is something, though after all only a shadow ; all this was not absolutely nothing since a symbol is something, though still only a symbol. God would not have us to be deceived, and therefore the law of change silently consumes or at once openly destroys all these symbols. The holiest perish in their turn ; that temple whose magnitude and splendor the disciples admired, that temple behooved to perish ; an avenging dispensation only accelerated the inevitable catastrophe. And how should this temple, reared by the hand of man, not have perished, seeing that God destines desolation to the temple which he himself has built ?

The universe is the first, the holiest, the most magnificent of temples. To call it so, is to give it its name, is to give a reason of its existence. For if the universe is not a temple, what is it, I ask ? Now this temple, of which God himself is the founder and architect, must perish. God has said it. Profaned as it is, how does it still subsist ? Might not he who, like a new Samson, (but with all the holiness which Samson had not,) fell into the cruel hands of the enemies of the people of God—might not he with his mighty arm have shaken the pillars of this vast edifice, and perished only under the ruins of the universe ? This he did not. After passing symptoms of destruction, destined to give note of warning that the earth itself with all its inhabitants subsists only by mercy, the earth and the heavens, reassured, have continued to see an uninterrupted series of day succeeding night, and night day, the sea ebbing and flowing under the gravitation of the heavenly bodies, and these again performing their wonted orbits in the heavens. But the sentence is

only delayed. The earth, like an unfortunate ship burnt in the open sea, must, in the course of its boundless voyage disappear in flame and tempest, become itself dust and ashes after having engulfed so much dust and ashes, and subsist only as an eternal and melancholy recollection in the memory of the celestial intelligences who were present at its birth and are to see its death. What do I say? This temple itself, with its movable architecture, amid which the earth occupies so small a spot, must sink into an ocean of fire in order that the catastrophe, by its easy and sudden accomplishment, may establish in all created minds this eternal principle of the Divine government—matter is made for mind, and mind for truth and God.

Thus, of this temple likewise, not one stone shall remain upon another. "Is this then what you are looking at?" But, in fact, if we should not look at what is to perish, should we look at this world more than any other thing?

Patient inquirers into the mysteries of nature, do we mean to condemn you? No, certainly; if it is the Spirit that you are seeking in matter; if across the visible, it is to the invisible, and in this world to the world's Author that you look. But, if it is not so, Jesus Christ says to you as to the disciples, "Is it this you are looking at?" I admit that your admiration is more rational, and your curiosity more learned, but what avails it if your curiosity stops by the way, and your admiration mistakes its object? I am willing that you should look; but it should be from above and not from below. All that is not seen in God is seen ill, or to no purpose. What do you admire in all these wonders if you admire not an idea, and consequently an idea of God? Explain yourself: leave us not in doubt as to the accuracy of your meaning. Till then we will continue to ask, "Is it this you are looking at?" A funeral pile, a mysterious tomb, are ready to engulf the world of astronomers, the

world of naturalists, the world of geologists. In the abode of reality, at the sources of being, there will no longer be any question as to changing phenomena; every thing will have been consumed save the mind which gave them birth and dictated their laws. If this mind has not been the object of your regard, what have you looked at?

"It is not phenomena," you say, "that you have looked at, but laws, and a law is a thought." This is the answer we expected. Tell us then positively that it is the thought of God: if not, we will say that it is your own thought, your own sagacity, your own penetration, your own spirit of discovery, and that consequently it is yourselves that you have looked at, so that all nature has only been a mirror for the pride of your intellect. Worthy subject of regard, a wisdom which will not rise to God! Fit subject of admiration! man detached from God! But, in fact, I mistake, there is much to look at. Monsters as well as prodigies are entitled, at least for a moment, to fix our astonished regard. Thus then, after having looked on this world without seeing God in it, look upon this look. It is no less worthy of your attention than the wonders of the universe. The universe itself might look at it. Creation, if it had a soul and a voice, would cry out at the sight of so fearful a prodigy. Nature, which contains prodigies in such numbers, has none equal to this; for even its monsters exemplify some law, whereas the monster we are speaking of, the horrible prodigy of man without God, no law can explain.

This brings us as near as possible to an important application of the words of Jesus Christ. There are many who despise material grandeur and visible lustre. They at least plume themselves on this, and that is something. But on what do they turn their look? What is the object of their admiration? If it is intellect, or what it has been thought appropriate to term *spirit*, (that is, life,) the repri-

mand of Jesus Christ still pursues them, "Is it this you are looking at?"

Intellect, whatever be its dignity, is not so far above matter as it is beneath charity. In making these distinctions, and measuring their distances, we mean not to put asunder what God himself has joined. We know that holiness, or as some would rather call it, morality, cannot exist without intellect, and that the being which thinks not is not a moral being. We must equally believe that created intellect is necessarily united to organs, since it will be so even in the abode of perfection, so that man, considered as a whole, is a being at once material, intellectual, and moral. Reduced to any one, or even two of these elements, he would no longer be a man. But if, notwithstanding the intimate union between intellect and body, one may affirm that there is no comparison between the body and the intellect, you will not be surprised at our saying that the moral though inseparable from the intellectual principle, is far superior to it. A relation between superior and inferior may very easily be conceived; only it is a relation or union of subordination. Now, the relation of intellect to morality is the same as that of the body to the intellect; the body is the organ of the intellect, and the intellect is, in its turn, the organ of morality, unless indeed we choose to say (and why not?) that the body and the intellect, though unequal, are together, the one by means of the other, the two organs of morality. This then is the end, those are the means; necessary means I admit, but still only means. In speaking thus I do not even go so far as Scripture, which says, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole man." If this is the whole man, what is all the rest? But we understand Solomon's meaning. The whole man is his whole destination, the whole reason of his existence, his whole glory before God.

The price which divine love paid for our salvation be-

hooved, doubtless, to ransom or save our intellect as well as our heart. What then was the object of our Saviour's mission? Whether did he come to expiate the errors of our judgment or the sins of our will; to teach us to reason well or to act well? Whether did he mean to make us philosophers or saints? This fact alone is sufficient to establish the truth which I set before you, and, independently of this fact, I am sure that your conscience establishes it. The glory of man is in the rectitude and proper employment of his will; and the glory of the intellect is to contribute to the triumph of the moral principle.

Now there is no occasion, even in the present day, to spend much argument in establishing the superiority of intellect over matter, although matter triumphs in many hearts, and even in many theories. But there is occasion, perhaps, to repress the enthusiasm of knowledge, and pride of intellect. It is necessary to tell men that if their subjection to matter is a degradation, the subordination of morality to intellect is another degradation; that the most intellectual man, if nothing more, is only an intelligent brute; that the triumphs of a demoralized intellect are not essentially different from the triumphs of brute force, and that the excessive admiration of genius proceeds from the same principle as that lust of the eye which is included by an apostle in the same condemnation as the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.

It is a fact which cannot be disputed or justified, that in every country, but in certain countries more especially, intellectual talents have procured pardon for the gravest errors in conduct; and that, when these talents have been superior, transcendent, they have thrown a thick veil over every thing else. Such a man would have been considered in society as a contemptible wretch if he had wanted talent; but with much talent he is never considered contemptible. Without talent every body would have shunned him; but he has



talent, and every body courts him. At least he is seen with a different eye from another man who does not display worse morals, nor adopt worse maxims. Some will even go so far as to say that a certain moral regularity is incompatible with genius, and that it would be too much to expect at once great talent and great virtue.

There is another fact which cannot be either contested or justified: it is, that simplicity of mind, even involuntary ignorance, or a certain foible in judgment, exposes a man to a contempt sometimes amounting to insult, whatever be the purity of his manners and excellence of his conduct. His good qualities will perhaps be admitted, and be even mentioned, but only as extenuating circumstances. It will perhaps be confessed that he is a man according to God's own heart, but none will seek to warm themselves at his hearth, to borrow from him that wisdom among the perfect, which, according to Scripture, enlightens the most simple, and which the most simple teach to the most learned. He has no talent, and therefore he goes for nothing. That he should not be courted for his conversation; in other words, that he should not be asked for what he cannot give, is plain enough. But this is not all. He is wrong in not having talent, just apparently as a man is wrong for not having added one cubit to his stature, or another, I presume, is wrong for being poor. You protest, but first reflect. Is it true or is it not true that poverty exposes us to the contempt of certain persons, as riches recommend us to their respect? The thing is unaccountable, absurd, and still true. Now, has the contempt of intellectual poverty any thing more absurd, more unaccountable than the other kind of contempt? And if vulgar souls are capable of despising a man because he is poor in this world's goods, will not other souls, one degree higher, be capable of looking with contempt, or at least with disdain, on men devoid of the advantages of intellect?

Modern idolatry has raised two altars, to which a crowd of idolaters press forward. One of these is the altar of matter, the other that of intellect. Upon both, human victims are offered; for all idolatrous worship is murderous worship. The adoration of intellect has its barbarity as well as the adoration of matter. The man of intellect finds his account in sparing nothing. He who despises most passes for having the most sagacity. It has been said that the heart often has intellect, but that the intellect has no heart. In the unrestrained pleasures of the intellect, as in the unrestrained pleasure of the senses, the heart dries up; the man becomes cruel. The whole truth must be told; he becomes even stupid. There are so many things of which we can only judge with the heart, that whenever the heart happens to fail, reason goes astray. To know to what degree the heart gives intelligence, to what degree also the worship of the mind lowers the intellect, set a man of intellect and a man of piety to decide a case of conscience. "Thy law, O God, gives wisdom to the simple; they looked, and were lightened."

And this is the reason why in our day the intoxication of intellectual triumphs gives me almost as much fear as the general tendency to material enjoyments. It is for this I would wish to turn your eyes and my own in the same direction towards which our divine Master sought to turn those of his disciples. Poor widow of the Gospel! humble female! whom our Saviour has, by a single expression, rendered for ever celebrated, still let fall your mite, your laborious toil mingled perhaps with your tears, into the treasury! Tell us, if your humility permits you, or rather, since our interest demands it, tell us what emotion of your soul made your indigent hand let fall for others as indigent this part of your substance—or, as you might tell us, this part of your flesh? Our eyes are satiated with the splendors of the symbolical sanctuary; open to us the sanctuary of your soul,

and unfold other splendors. Show us your sufferings transformed into pity; your misery giving you eyes to see the misery of others; make us read, in this generous soul applying to itself precepts which, poor as you are, perhaps did not concern you. Tell us what gratitude you feel because God has furnished you with a mite to give. Communicate to us the secret of the surplus from labor which gained it: the prayer, perhaps, which procured it; your whole life, at once happy and painful, of fatigue and self-denial. Admit us to share in that glorious fellowship which you hold in the bosom of your obscurity with the God of all consolation. O, I have need to rest my eye after all this passing show, and my ears after all this useless noise; the pomp of power, the pomp of intellect, (another power more haughty and more tyrannical,) stun and fatigue me; my heart, empty and famished, has need of substance, reality, and reality and substance are there with you, poor female, forsaken of man and visited by God; but with thee, above all, O my divine Saviour! in whom there is neither form nor comeliness; with thee, who hast said, "I am a worm, and no man," and who art nevertheless Lord to the glory of God the Father!

For it is there, in fact; it is in Jesus Christ that the Spirit triumphs in the annihilation of the flesh. There, in the absence of all grandeur appears true grandeur, grandeur of mind. "When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." But who speaks of *seeing*? *Feeling* is the object. Shut the eyes of the body, open the eyes of the soul, and you will say with Pascal, "O, with how great pomp and magnificence has he come in the eyes of the heart, and of those who see wisdom!" Behold for once, behold the true temple of the true God! A temple of marble, glittering with gold, keeps your eyes far away from the living temple, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells. "Is it this you are looking at?" Can you look at any thing else

when love is there ? Now, love is the glory of the intellect ; it is even the glory of God. He in whom supreme love resides thereby represents supreme grandeur. This is what we should look at, and look for aye.

Ah ! if you do not approve you will at least comprehend those who, having with the eye of faith seen Jesus Christ (i. e. love) living and personified, have no longer wished to look at any thing else. They were here in error, but all errors are not equal. Between him who looks at Jesus Christ and nothing else, and him who looks at every thing but Jesus Christ, which of you could hesitate to choose ? But what you will understand, and what you will approve, is that they who have seen Jesus Christ feel pity for those who do not look at him. To those whose view is alternately engrossed by material and intellectual grandeur, they ask as he did, "Is it this you are looking at?" In the view of eternity, the herb of the field is equal in duration, equal in grandeur, to all these monuments, or even to the highest conceptions of intellect ; for in the universal wreck all things will perish which are not united to God, who alone is above all wreck. All things, I say ; your very thoughts. Pyramids or systems, no matter ; towering Alps, or dreams higher than the highest mountains, ye will perish together ! God alone is immortal, and communicates his immortality only to that which is conformable to him, is united to him. Obedience in humility, obedience by love, never perish. The gifts of nature are revocable ; the gifts of grace are immortal.

It is also in this sense that Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light, and the glory of Christianity is to have reduced visible things to their true value, and assigned them their place in contrast with things invisible. This characteristic is even so prominent, that it seems impossible to understand and receive Christianity except as the reign of intellect, and the triumph of what is invisible. But Christi-

anity has taken a form in the world ; it has become visible. Travelling over ages, and propagating itself in the world, it has assumed a place among the things to which the world pays regard ; and besides this grandeur of space and duration which procures it a species of respect on the part of the most indifferent, it has, by its intellectual grandeur (I mean by the grandeur of the ideas which it expresses, and those which it suggests,) captivated the regard and admiration of thinkers. Thus is it great after the fashion of the world. Beware of admiring it most of all for that grandeur. Let us fear lest its true grandeur escape our notice. Let us not allow our eye to be misled, and oblige Jesus Christ to say to us again, " Is it this you are looking at ? " How great our misfortune if we should have entered the empire of the invisible only to link ourselves more securely to the visible, and if in the kingdom of spirit we should have been able only to find the world ! How miserable, if trusting to those vain and hollow words, " The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord," we should neglect, as the prophet says in the same place, thoroughly to amend our ways and our doings. Jer. vii. 4, 5. To look only to this twofold greatness of Christianity, the material and intellectual, is truly to do like the first companions of Jesus Christ, to fix our look upon stones. Vast thoughts, secular traditions, splendid recollections, all these are stones ; cold materials, hard and dead. There are other stones, living stones, which form together a spiritual building, a holy priesthood. 1 Peter ii. 5. Of the number of those living stones was probably this woman, whose generous charity Jesus Christ had observed ; of this number are all those sincere and humble souls who by repentance have been born to the new life which is hidden with Christ in God ; souls, some of whom perhaps have not been able to give God any thing but themselves, but given unreservedly. Here are the beautiful

stones and splendid gifts at which we ought to look. Let us seek them ; let us seek, beneath this noisy world, which is carried away by vanity, as well as beneath the external majesty of worship, beneath the forms, it may be imposing forms, of religious establishment—let us seek this secret, and, in some measure, subterraneous world, those catacombs of humility in which is silently celebrated the worship in spirit and in truth, and in which is practised a religion pure and undefiled. There, a spiritual spectacle, whose beauty will fill our hearts with rapture, awaits us. Humility, forgiveness, alms, patience, prayer, devotedness to God, thirst after righteousness, zeal for the Divine glory,—these are the splendors of this sanctuary ; splendors rendered still more striking by contrast when it is a poor man, a slave, an ignorant man, a child—what do I say ?—a penitent malefactor, who exhibits them in his own person. O, how far is a sincere love of true grandeur still removed from our heart ! How readily does the obscurity, sometimes sadness, which shrouds this beauty, repel us ! how willingly do we keep company with noise and pride ! how carnal we still are ! how little prepared for this kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of spirit ! how much we require to change and grow, if not to be born ! A power higher than our own, higher than all human power, can alone raise us to that point of view from which whatever is little appears little, and whatever is great appears great. But cannot we even now ask of Him who disposes of this power to exert it in our behalf, and give at length to us, as he has given to others, “ those eyes of the heart which see wisdom ? ”

## ONE NATION AND ALL NATIONS.\*

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"Salvation is of the Jews."—JOHN iv. 22.

THE whole pride of modern wisdom may be summed up in one sentence, and this sentence, a very different one from that which I propose for your meditation, is : The salvation of man is from man. Men love to persuade themselves, and, by dint of repetition, come to believe that human nature draws every thing from its own proper resources. At all times has this been said, but not always in the same sense. Human nature formerly was each man taken individually. Each man by his own strength and spontaneous development accomplished his own salvation, or to express the idea in a manner still more conformable to human pride, each man provided for his own destiny, and made himself secure of the greatest possible sum of holiness, both in this world and the next, provided there be a next. How these individual and independent attempts could lead to the collective salvation of mankind, the fulfilment of his destiny on the earth, the reali-

\* This discourse, perhaps too abstruse for the pulpit, appears to have been delivered as a professional lecture.

zation even of the idea of human nature, was not said, and was not explained. The fact is that it was seldom thought of. At a much later period, and under influences of which we shall afterwards have to speak, was formed the great idea now so widely diffused, which considers human nature as one person, or at least as a society. The very idea, the word humanity, (human nature,) scarcely existed, at least as a collective name for the human race. It must not then be imagined that there could have been any question as to the future prospect, the destiny, and still less the salvation of humanity.

However, at no time, and still less in ancient-times than in the present day, could man have considered himself merely as an individual being. Facts did not allow it, nor were his powers in any case adequate to it; for man comes into the world under the law of collective being, and society is to man what the soil is to the plant. Moreover, the idea of individual existence in regard to all that is moral and sublime in it, had long been too high for him. If he had not the idea of a humanity, which out of all human beings forms one whole, a unit, a person, so he must have been incapable of forming an idea of individuality, in virtue of which each man belongs to himself, is a true person, and depends immediately on God. In other words, he was incapable of entertaining two opposite ideas, or to speak more exactly, incapable of uniting in his thought the two forms of one single and same idea, which is that of man, an idea which is not complete, and not even accurate, unless it embraces and combines the two notions of individuality and humanity. It was between the two, perhaps at the middle, between these two poles, that the human mind sought, and we may even say, found a resting place. In this twofold impossibility of being truly one, and at the same time uniting in thought and in heart with humanity as a whole, nationality came to its



aid; nationality, a true idea in so far as it is not exclusive, a just and beneficent idea, when we place it in the same line where the two ideas of individuality and humanity meet, and are merged into one. But so far from this, nationality was the negation of both. The former individuality was absorbed, or at least rendered lifeless. It immediately lost its finest character and most excellent application, I mean personal religion, immediate communication with God, internal liberty of conscience and of thought; because nationality, proceeding on a principle of appropriation with a view to public utility, declared the religion of individuals to be natural property, and merged it in the community, inasmuch that all which remained of human individuality, as an impure residue and coarse refuse, was only selfishness. In regard to the idea of humanity, (which is as old as that of individuality, and may be said to have been born on the same day with man,) it had become almost entirely effaced, and all that nationality, that collective egotism, that personality with a thousand heads, did, was to cause the least vestiges and even last remembrance of it to disappear.

I dare claim your fullest attention for this important fact which pervades all history, or rather whose successive manifestations constitute all history. What is called history, is in fact, in a merely human point of view, only the chronology of nationalities. And how has God treated this fact, which, though true and legitimate when kept within due bounds, is false and fatal when exaggerated? Has he rejected and disowned it because it was abused? No; God while rectifying has accepted and consecrated it, and has made the greatest use of it, for he has made it contribute (admirable arrangement!) to the restoration of the two ideas whose reconciliation and harmony constitute the true nature of man, and the truth of human existence. God has made nationality subservient to the double and simultaneous tri-

umph of the principle of individuality, and the principle of humanity.

It is impossible for a Christian not to concur in what we say, when he casts his eye on the words of Christ, "Salvation is of the Jews." But I cannot repeat these words of our Master, without thinking at the same time of the impression which they must produce on one who is not a Christian. Allow me to stop here for an instant. I am willing to omit what is strange and offensive in the word *salvation* to an unchristian ear. Every one wishes to be happy, none wishes to be saved. And yet the word would not be objected to, would we consent to give it a purely temporal meaning, and employ it to designate the triumph which man has painfully obtained, dearly purchased, over all the elements hostile to his happiness which creation contains. Well; for the moment be it so. But how offensive to hear it declared, that salvation, whatever be its nature, is of the Jews! Some, who would not be astonished were we to tell them that salvation is of the French, and who have perhaps in different terms a thousand times declared it, are indignant when the happiness of the world is said to have originated with a wretched people, bent for a thousand years under the weight of universal contempt. But others, and probably the greater number, are merely astonished at our presuming to make a particular people the depositary, and so to speak, the dispenser of the common felicity. Each people, or at least, each great people, would willingly adjudge to itself the emphatic title of *middle empire*, but each obstinately refuses it to all the rest. They refuse to acknowledge either an individual or a nation as their saviour. All individuals, it is said, all nations are complete in themselves. There is only one real personality, there is only one idea, and it is that of the whole world combined without distinction of individual persons. Persons, individual or national, are only like the innumerable

and transient ripples which appear on the ocean, when it is stirred in its lowest depths. They do not agitate its mass, but it produces them by its agitation. The author of the salvation of humanity is humanity itself, nothing more or less than all humanity, which, however, I presume has never been convoked to deliberate on the subject. Nations have hitherto acted separately without concert, without knowing one another, each for itself. There is indeed, I am persuaded, a convocation, a "gathering" of nations, (Gen. xlix. 10,) but one that is silent, mysterious, and superintended by Providence. If we one day come to act in concert from one extremity of the world to the other, it will not be without having desired, or without having foreseen it. We do not assemble, but are assembled; humanity, whose exploits we would at present relate, is still creating itself slowly, is gradually being formed like a blessed fruit in the bowels of the Divine mercy. We are assisting at the birth: let us wait till it takes place; we will be able afterwards to tell what it has accomplished.

But be this as it may, and whatever be the diversity of opinions as to the salvation of the world, no one wishes it to come from a nation, (unless perhaps it be his own,) in particular no one wishes it to come from the Jews. I mean none except Christians. They no doubt subscribe respectfully to the declaration, "Salvation is of the Jews," though perhaps they do not all enter into the meaning and force of the expression.

With regard to the meaning of the first of the terms, there is no dispute. This salvation is eternal salvation, and consequently individual salvation, since neither nations nor human nature are eternal. At most, it is necessary to observe, that this salvation comprehends both the welfare of human nature as such, and the fulfilment of its destinies in whatever way we are pleased to understand it. If it is of

importance not to reverse the terms, not to make human perfection the very end of the Gospel, the object of the mediation of Christ ; it is of importance also to remember that the one blessing carries the other in its train ; that the greater, if we may so speak, includes the less ; that in the divine creation, which is one and perfect, there are intimate and necessary relations between individual and general welfare, between religious truth and social truth, between the interest of time and the interest of eternity ; that the happiness of humanity in this world, its temporal redemption, is as it were the counterpart and seal of that other redemption, which will only be fully realized in the society of the elect, and in the abode of all perfection ; in fine, that when we read that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, we must understand that he came to seek and to save not only every man, but also man as a whole ; consequently all his faculties, all his capacities, the man of the earth as well as the man of heaven, in other words, *human nature* as well as *man*. The Gospel is thus, we frankly admit, a *humanitary* work, inasmuch as it is a work for behalf of man. In all senses, the Gospel has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.

But this salvation, whatever it be, *is of the Jews*. Without referring further to temporal blessings, to social advantages, to *humanitarianism*, we say that the reconciliation of the soul with its Divine Author, the right to call him Father, the regeneration of the heart, the sanctification of the life, the privilege of drawing freely on the treasures of the Divine Spirit, peace and hope here below, and glory and immortality in the heavens, and to say all in one word, the participation of man in the Divine nature, (for so an apostle has expressed it,) all this for each man, for all men, for the men of all countries and all times, is of the Jews. No one assuredly will mistake the channel for the source ; and to use the

terms in their fullest extent, each will repeat with the multitude of the redeemed in the Apocalypse, "Salvation to our God!" Rev. vii. 10. But still the Jews are the channel: if not properly of them, it is by them that salvation comes to us; and salvation is heaven; salvation is God himself.

In the simplicity of its ignorance, ancient poetry represented certain countries as the abode or cradle of the rising sun, as if the sun ever stopped, or any spot in the world could be the witness of its birth and departure. The aurora has no country, the east is every where; and the countries from which the sun comes to us have seen him come from some other country to which it had in like manner come. But in the world of truth and of grace the rising sun has an abode, and every country is an east. Salvation is of the Jews. Yes, disinherited land, where the smoking flame of the divine wrath alone illumines frightful darkness, thou wast the abode of the rising sun! yes, unhappy people, posterity of another Ham, race so humbled that the most contemptible think themselves entitled to condemn thee, people sunk in disgrace, from thee our glory comes, we are upstarts loaded with thy spoils and the treasures of thy opulence. Salvation comes from thee. O may salvation return to thee, and may this West which thou hast enlightened become in its turn thy East!

"Salvation is of the Jews." But how? Is it only because the Saviour of men and Shepherd of humanity was born among this people, and in his marvellous infancy drew nourishment from the breast of a Jewess? Is it because thirty-three years of his earthly existence were spent in Judea? because eternal truth proceeded from his lips in the language of the descendants of Jacob? because the first disciples of the Master belonged also to this extraordinary people? because the first germ of the Christian Church and the modern world was thrown among that dust which the

blood of Jesus was to dye and fertilize? Is it because Gethsemane is Jewish, and Calvary Jewish, and because a Jewish tree furnished the accursed wood to which the Divine Champion of humanity was nailed? Is it, in fine, (Oh, dreadful!) because the sons of Abraham, with their own hands, planted this tree of death, attached the beneficent hands of Christ to its horrible branches, and under the blood which fell from it drop by drop, placed their own heads and those of their children? Is it only in such senses as these that salvation is of the Jews? This is the question before us, and we will now endeavor to answer it.

I have already said, and I now repeat, that if "salvation is of the Jews," it is not, it cannot be in the same sense in which "salvation cometh from the Lord." Two declarations of the Gospel cannot contradict each other; and the elect speaking in heaven cannot belie Jesus Christ speaking on the earth. Salvation is of the Jews, as the water of a stream comes from a hollow basin in the rock at the top of a mountain. There the water is collected, and from thence it flows. The Jewish people is this basin, this reservoir, this immense cup in which the living waters of salvation were gradually collected. But these waters are the waters of heaven, which have slowly distilled them into this cup or basin. We all understand this: let us proceed.

This truth being established, and the word *is* being reduced to its true meaning, we might begin by availing ourselves of an idea which is pretty generally diffused, and of which our age boasts the discovery; I mean, that each people is the bearer or representative of an idea; and that each idea, in order to fix itself in the world, in order to become in the course of time a blessing to humanity, has need of a people. It is true that the individual actings of some eminent person, prophet, captain, or legislator, are discerned in the history of each idea, and often even to such a degree

that the idea takes the name of that individual. But we must not deceive ourselves : the individual did not invent but find ; he has not so much taught his people as been taught by them ; all become his disciples, but he began by being the disciple of all. It is their own peculiar thought that he has unfolded. What is peculiar to him is his having pronounced the magic word, and while giving to his contemporaries a consciousness of their instincts, to have given them a will—an immense gift, for to give a will is to give life, is to engender and become a parent. But still it holds true in this case as in every other of a similar nature. If there is a father, there is a mother also : the father is the thought of an individual, the mother is the instinct of all. Thought has converted instinct into a determinate will, a firm purpose, and from that moment the nation has lived.

Be this as it may, each people has found its idea, and each idea its people. This means that, in order to cultivate and bring to perfect growth an idea, which elsewhere existed only in the bud, there has been found a people or race, and in this race or this people an individual. Nations, in their intercourse, have bartered their ideas as they do the products of their soil. No people produces all ideas, just as no soil produces all plants : each may be said to bring only some one to maturity, and so long as it is in the course of being formed and located, it allows no other to take place beside it : it is intolerant and exclusive. Human weakness seeming to require that it should be so, it becomes imperative.

Now it cannot be doubted that an exclusive or merely exaggerated idea is an error. In a certain point of view, therefore, each people seems destined to cultivate an error. Deplorable, but too true conclusion ! Let us never forget, however, that error in matters of idea never is, and never can be any thing but a fragment of truth ; and looking from

another point of view, let us say that each people cultivates a truth at the expense of all other truths, but it is always to a people that the administration of this truth is intrusted. Thus considered with reference to humanity at large, each people is the head of a school, and so to speak, a system.

Such is the uniform law. And now, if each partial truth has had a people to represent it in the world, might not the whole truth, the truth which contains all truth, and by which alone, properly speaking, other things are true, in conformity to this great law, also have a people for its apostle? This is the question.

This people, apostle, prophet, and pontiff, this people, teacher of all other nations and of humanity, some will without much difficulty admit, while others will absolutely deny. I say that some will admit, namely, those who, regarding the truth as the result of a juxtaposition or a judicious combination of all partial truths, will consider it possible, and even, in the course of ages inevitable, definitively to concentrate all the elements of which, in their opinion, truth is compounded. To ascertain whether this concentration has already been effected; whether the time has come for closing accounts, is a question of *fact*; but, as regards them, the *principle* is not in question, and it will be seen immediately that they grant us more than we ask. Moreover, there is in the world a powerful and numerous body, with whom the question of fact has long been settled. What is that which is improperly called *the Church*, and ought to be called *the Roman Hierarchy*, but a people, or at least a tribe, who pretend to possess the truth, and arrogate to themselves the exclusive right of dispensing it? Now to possess the truth is to possess salvation, provided there be such a thing as salvation.

I have said that others will absolutely refuse what these grant. They will say that the truth is not the successive



juxtaposition of all partial truths. They will say that truth, like the seamless robe of our Lord, is one and indivisible. They will say that it cannot be obtained by sewing all truths together. They will say that in order thus to see them, it would be necessary to possess them, and that we possess them not so long as we have not the supreme truth from which they proceed. They will say that that which makes a nation fit for cultivating a particular truth, unfits it for cultivating all truths at once, or, which comes to the same thing, the truth of truths, seeing that it is precisely this exclusiveness that determines the character of a people, determines the bent, and consequently the power, of its will. Thus the supposition, that a nation might be the depositary of supreme truth, fails. According to the nature of things, then, there is nothing common between nationality and truth; and, though it may have been said with reason, that each great people has been the representative, or if you will the prophet, of an idea, we cannot say of any people that it is, or will be, the prophetic people in the absolute sense of the term. No people, then, considered as a people, is the people of truth, and consequently salvation, which is closely united to truth, cannot come from any people.

Our opinion lies between these two extremes, or rather adopts the second under modification. We do not see any thing common between a people as such, and truth. Truth can only take up a position, can only dwell in the individual, inasmuch as the individual alone is organized, I say not to create, but to perceive the truth. Nationality, left to itself, is not qualified for the part which some would make it play. But I do not say this of nationality placed, by an extraordinary dispensation, in extraordinary circumstances. Such may communicate to a people, not the nature and properties of an individual, but aptitude to receive, preserve, and transmit the deposit of truth. God takes this people to himself,

and makes it his in the strictest acceptance of the term. First, he raises it from the dust as he raised the first man; he creates, fashions, and appropriates it in a special sense, and in an effectual manner. He speaks to it as one man speaks to another, he makes it at every moment feel his presence, which he evinces by miraculous signs; he governs and directs it immediately; in one word, in regard to this people, he substitutes evidence for conviction, and sight for faith, could such a substitution take place absolutely without annihilating both human morality and faith, which is, in all cases and in all senses, the principle of morality. This extraordinary government is what is called Theocracy, or the personal government of God. All primitive nations have pretended to enjoy it. Theocracy is the universal claim of ancient nationalities. It lies at the foundation of all forms of government. A chimera, no doubt it is, but one which once at least has been a reality. There has been a people who were the people of God, and who, in circumstances in which there was no room for deception, distinctly heard the voice of God himself; thus becoming the depository of his divine oracles, and exemplifying sovereign truth in its institutions and its laws.

Observe, that to make it the people of God it is sufficient that it has heard the voice of God, and been well assured that it was his voice. This idea leaves no room for more particular ideas. It necessarily becomes the characteristic idea of this people. Theocracy is necessarily the governing and guiding principle of a theocratic people; and you will see that when God reigns personally, when the people exists not only by him but for him, when, in fine, his will is reason, and his glory the end of all things, when civil life at every instant and under all forms is legally only a worship, no idea stands prominently forth among other ideas. All the elements of which in very different proportions the moral life

of a people can be composed, balance each other under the empire of a sovereign principle which puts every thing in its proper place, and arranges while overruling all.

Observe again, that, in the case which has been supposed, there is nothing tending to consecrate the false and dangerous principle which arbitrarily fixes a relation between nationality and truth. Here in fact we have not a nation which conceives an idea, but a nation which receives it. The nation cannot even in this case be likened to a mother who may say to the child to whom she has given birth, This being is part of myself. No, the nation is here completely passive, like the basin which receives the waters of heaven, or the channel in which they flow. It is a locality for truth, a haven, an asylum, and, moreover, this asylum is temporary. This rule of theocracy, which is true, and alone true, if we look only to the idea of which it is the symbol, the sovereign authority of God, is, however, in regard to application and detail, only a symbolical and preparatory rule, since man does not rise to his full dignity without liberty, which theocratic rule checks and suspends.

But still, you will say, why curb, why suspend it? It is proved to us that a people may become the depository of truth, God making it capable of being so: but will God do all that he can? Why this halting of truth in nationality? Why, instead of those preliminaries and delays, not proceed at once to the worship in spirit and in truth, which ceases to attach the truth to a particular spot, and confine it to a nation? Was it then necessary that truth should lay aside its wings, and, instead of reaching each soul like a ray across space, humbly plod along our dusty roads, and follow the path which human thought has pointed out? In two words, why was it necessary that truth should be at first national, the affair of a people, or race, or tribe?

Another objection is made; it is asked if in fact sovereign

truth, all truth, was confided to the Jewish people, and not rather a particular truth, a part of truth.

It is asked, in fine, if salvation does not resolve itself into the free and candid acceptance of salvation; if salvation is not wholly included in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and consequently if the Jewish people is not here a mere supernumerary. If so, how could Jesus Christ say that salvation is of the Jews?

We will not answer these objections in the order in which they may naturally present themselves to our mind. The examination of the last will gradually give that of the other two.

Salvation, it is said, is nothing else than Jesus Christ received into the soul. Let Jesus Christ and the soul but meet; this circumstance alone constitutes salvation. What then has the Jewish people to do in a case so simple and individual, and how can it be said that salvation is of the Jews?

Yes, you say well,—Let Jesus Christ and the soul meet, it is enough. But how, at what cost has your soul obtained this meeting? I suspect you do not know.

When under the burning heat of a mid-day sun your strength and even your life are fainting away from oppressive thirst, should you happen to fall in with a river, and a little of its water, a drop, perhaps, restores and revives you: you bless the drop of water, for it was it, not the stream, that refreshed you. You did not drink from the stream. But did not the stream furnish the drop of water, and but for the stream could you have drank at all? But for this would not the sand have absorbed it perhaps twenty leagues off? This volume of water from which you were not to drink was necessary to carry along the drop which you drank; thus, every thing considered, it was the river that saved you.

In the same way, in a spiritual sense, it is the Church which saves you, because it gives you Jesus Christ. Far be

from us the Popish error according to which the Church believes in God, and each Christian in the Church. We joyfully maintain that the relations of the believer with the living water, which is Christ, are immediate ; and that the Church, in other words, the Christian commonwealth, during successive ages, is the torrent or river which brings to us the name, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and so to speak, Jesus Christ himself. Without the Church there is no Christianity and no Christians. Unless those tears of heaven find a bed to collect them, unless all these drops of living water become a stream, the ground absorbs and retains them, and the truth does not reach you. The very book which contains them is altered, forgotten, or perishes ; and without an entirely new revelation, without a miracle incessantly repeated, you remain in ignorance and death. The Church, by its volume and its weight, forms a current which carries it forward, and bears to each of you that word, that name, that invisible element which, incorporating itself with you, renews your whole being. And in what condition has this current been formed ? Do you not know ? Look well at those waves, red with human blood, and darkened by the ashes of funeral piles. The perpetuity of truth ! A thousand combats have paid for it. Suffering goes before prescription, pain is the mortar of this everduring edifice. You say that a Christian word pronounced by friendly lips, a single passage of the Bible, less perhaps than that, has converted you. But what formed around you that Christian atmosphere which you have not been able to avoid breathing ? what created in your heart those spiritual wants of which before the Gospel there was no idea ? what prepared for this hour of silence and reflection the mysterious agency, the hidden influence to which you yielded ? Though you knew it not it was the Church ; and if you believe me you will understand, perhaps for the first time, the importance which the Apostles and

Jesus Christ himself attach to the idea of the Church, that living and continual personification of the whole body of believers, and the remarkable prepossession which so often leads the sacred writers to speak of the Church where you would have spoken only of the soul. In fact, your Christianity, how individual soever it may be, (and in my opinion it never can be too much so,) is extracted from, is stamped, so to speak, by the Christianity of sixty generations; the Christian as well as the physical man carries in his veins the blood of tens of thousands, whose successive and combined alliances issue and terminate in him. Ages and nations have labored for each of you; each of you is an heir of antiquity, and the work of a whole world.

This prepares us for listening, without surprise, to the words of my text, "Salvation is of the Jews." Why, since each of us proceeds from the Church, should not the Church itself proceed from the Jews? Why should not the Church, for which each of us has been prepared, have been also prepared? If it is not too much for a whole world to give birth to one of the elect, would it be too much for a people to give birth to all the elect, or to the great body from whom all the elect are taken? But, admirable circumstance! as every thing ends with the individual, every thing proceeds from the individual. For if before being spiritually born each of us is in the bowels of the Church, and the Church herself in the bowels of the Jewish nation, this whole nation was in the loins, or rather, in the heart of the father of the faithful. Abraham is the father of us all.

Yes, I admit, the work of salvation resolves itself into a fact strictly individual; and this fact, multiplied by the Divine mercy, is properly the object of redemption. For, though the righteous must form a society in heaven, the excellence of this society consists in the individual holiness of its members, and has no other measure. For, if the work

of salvation is a fact strictly individual, it depends on general causes ; it connects itself with a vast body of facts, in such a way that every individual who believes he has received the gift of salvation can and must say, My salvation is of the Jews.

Salvation consists, it is said, in the acceptance of an unconditional pardon. It should rather be said that it is summed up or terminates in it, just as lines proceeding from the four corners of the immense base of a pyramid meet in a single indivisible point at its apex. Salvation, after all, includes and presupposes many different things ; and it is thus that the ancient posterity of Jacob find a place in the work of individual salvation.

This proposition would be too easily defended if we could say, as many perhaps would say, that Jesus Christ, the author of salvation, is only the last expression and final development of the wisdom of the Jewish people ; so that this people becomes our saviour in the person of the most perfect representative of the Jews, Him who is by way of eminence the ideal Jew. But we will not speak thus. It is not by the wisdom of his people, nor even his personal wisdom, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those who attach themselves to him. He is so by himself individually and by his whole person. It is not because he is a Jew, but because he is God manifest in the flesh, the Word become incarnate, the ineffable union of human nature with the Divine essence. His wisdom is his own ; and, far from having been taught it by his people, he himself, the divine Word, has at all times taught his people by the mouth of the prophets. And yet it is impossible to mistake the spirit of the Divine government. His uniform method is not to do any thing precipitately, not to leave gaps in history, and suppress means and preparatives. His miracles, when he performed them, served only to widen a path which had been already opened. Jesus

Christ, who acted by the Spirit of God, is a proof of this. He did no miracles, except to encourage faith ; and did few where little faith was found. Matt. xiii. 58.

Although, in one sense, nothing can serve as a preparation to the incarnation of the eternal Word, the instruction contained in the books of the ancient covenant is nevertheless a progressive instruction, which, from epoch to epoch, leads us gradually forward towards the Gospel. The law in the letter you see succeeded by the law in the Spirit, a ritual worship by the religion of the heart, legislation by prophecy, justice by love, bondage by freedom, the idea of salvation by works by the idea of salvation by faith. As prophet follows prophet, who sees not how the horizon is streaked with light, how the east is kindling up, and the first rays of the star of day darting from behind the hills? Sacrifice, to him who sees not in it a symbol of the future, is, as it were, abolished in the mind before being abolished in itself. Moses intervening, had, so to speak, interrupted Abraham. Abraham reappears ; the spirit of Abraham is seen across the anathemas of the law, and the law itself, by causing sin to abound, is preparing men to desire and receive grace. The sole object of grace is still absent, but he is already designated and characterized by prophecy. This new prophet is not yet called by his name. An articulate description is not yet given, either of all the circumstances of his advent or all the clauses of his covenant, but at length he is revealed as the prophet of grace, of love, and of free-will : as the deliverer, the founder of worship in Spirit and in truth ; as, moreover, the messenger ; the Son of God. He is heir at once of the miseries of man and of the love of God. The religion of love furnishes a foretaste ; the air of liberty is already breathed ; the depths of mercy are stirred, and the human heart begins to cherish unknown hopes. Every thing in these successive revelations is compact, logi-



cal, and regular; the progress of opinion among a people left to themselves, would not be more so, would perhaps be less; so that when the king arrives, there is a people ready to receive and proclaim him. He is born in purple, and reigns from his cradle.

This people which waits for the Saviour, which bears testimony to him, and will be the first fruits of the great people which he is to gather out of every tribe, and tongue, and nation, could only be drawn from the bosom of the Jewish people. He is its chosen one, its pure essence; he is the ideal Jewish people, the Israel of God. Israel according to the flesh is to this Israel according to the spirit what the tree is to the blessed branches which will be divinely ingrafted into it. Into what then, if not into the tree, will the branches be ingrafted? With what care and sage lingering precaution has this people been prepared! How miraculous, and at the same time how natural its formation and growth! What travail in mind accompanies the travail of God in his word! During all the dispensations, all the vicissitudes of which the history of the Jewish people is comprised, how do the religious ideas of the chosen people become matured, strengthened, and purified! How well Divine Providence has guarded against precipitation, and adapted its pace to that of the human mind! How carefully it allows each experiment to finish its course, each idea to take its time, each error to exhaust itself. How completely dead is the old economy when the new commences, and how completely the whole necessary circuit has been compassed when Jesus Christ arrives!

But let us speak not only of that spiritual people in which, from the most ancient times, Jesus Christ recognized his Church. The Jewish people, taken as a whole, received of God the education necessary to be the forerunner of Christ among the nations. It is true indeed that a fatal division is

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Jesus Christ on coming into the world found ready to receive him ; the Jewish people foretold the great truths which prepare for receiving Gospel truth ; the Jewish people was the first and necessary propagation of the Gospel ; the Jewish people at the commencement of Christianity could alone bear witness to Jesus Christ ; the Jewish people, choosing or rejecting him, is the immortal witness of the Saviour ;—I say that a Christian after having considered all these things will have no repugnance to repeat, Salvation, my own salvation, is of the Jews !

People who murdered their God ! we sometimes exclaim in sorrowful indignation ; prophetic people, let us more willingly say, symbolical people, destined to consecrate even while resisting the principles of the Divine government, and to preserve, while concentrating and bringing near to each other, the blessed germs from which the happiness of the world was to spring ! The wisdom of God is infinitely varied, but his work is one ; and because it is divine, it contains nothing but what is necessary and essential. It was necessary in order that this individual, lost apparently in the abyss of time and the mass of humanity, should know, adore, and serve Jesus Christ ; and in order that in an obscure and perhaps unperceived existence, he should contribute to the glory of his Creator, it was necessary that there should be a Jewish people. Without this people the waters of grace, shed at hazard on the earth, and every where absorbed and lost, would never have formed that deep, limpid, and irresistible current which, flowing at a later period in a new channel, has formed the current of the Christian Church. The first people was necessary to form the second, of which you form part, and without which you could not exist. Thus the whole is linked together ; thus, alternately, the great proceeds from the little and the little from the great, the general from the particular and the particular from the

general. Thus from the individual was born the people, and conversely, from the people will be born the individual. At the outset Abraham, at the end yourself, and between, so as to unite you to your origin, a nation and a Church, the Jewish people and the Christian people. Such is the providence of God, who, from heaven, as the Psalmist says, beholds all things, the highest and the lowest, the atom and the universe, all and each, worlds and me.

Here I cannot help turning your attention to another text of Scripture: "The diminishing of them," says St. Paul in speaking of the Jews, "is the riches of the Gentiles." Rom. xi. 12. If there is an offence in these words, it is easy to remove it. As a people, that is, as a political society or race, the Jews could not become the new people, the wholly spiritual people. Under the rule of complete liberty, which is that of complete truth, on the individual resuming his rights, nationality loses its privilege. The new economy behooved to open by an appeal to individuality, and this appeal necessarily led to a *diminution*. Alas! a diminution so considerable, that St. Paul at the same place terms it a *falling away* of the Jewish people. If this diminution is not in itself the cause of the riches of the world, it is at least an inevitable condition of them. The new people could not be enlarged, or even formed, except at the cost of the diminution of the old people; the world could not be enriched except by the poverty of Israel. Thenceforward the prophetic people appears to me as a victimized people. But it is not so for ever. It must be gathered anew, and is gathered every day; but it is after the manner of the new people, according to the principle of individuality, and according to the law of liberty. This illustrious race, to which pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, the ordinance of the law, divine service, and the promises; this race from which Christ is descended, is not destined to be for ever among the

nations a deplorable monument of the Divine anger. After having seen its diminution, the world will see its fulness. If their diminishing, says the Apostle, is our riches, what will their fulness be? When the fulness of Israel shall have returned to the fold, will not Israel again be a prophetic people? Will not the accomplishment of this promise be to itself as a testimony of the Divine faithfulness, an admonitor to all nations, and a powerful call upon all to faith and obedience; and will not this people, as marvellous in its restoration as in its fall, be again, and more than ever, a powerful leaven to leaven the mass of humanity? In every case, its fulness will be our joy and consolation. None of us acquiesce in the idea that God has for ever rejected the instrument of the world's deliverance; and we have no difficulty in entering into the spirit of those passages, as explicit as numerous, in which, long before the falling and diminution, fulness was prophesied, and in which the God of Abraham sheds on the descendants of Abraham all the treasures of his immortal tenderness. The meaning of the prophecy still remains veiled to the unhappy posterity of Jacob; but the time will at length come when, the veil being taken away, they as well as we will clearly comprehend the following affecting words: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste. . . . As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away." Isa. xlix. 16-19.

## CHRISTIAN UTILITARIANISM.

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"Mercy and truth are met together."—PSALM lxxxv. 10.

AMONG the charges which have been brought against Christianity, (and what charges have not been brought ?) there is one which in our day seems to be specially insisted on : it is that Christianity appeals too exclusively to the love of happiness, and is in open league with the selfishness of the human heart. No charge can be more grave, since, if it is well-founded, it leaves Christianity destitute of the highest merit to which all religion lays claim, namely, that of rendering us better, this being possible only by detaching us from ourselves. Christianity would thus have aggravated the evil which it was its business to cure ; and, instead of merely saying that it does not fulfil its end, we should be obliged to say that it runs counter to its end, the very end of all religion, and there is no mere human morality which is not preferable to it, since all human morality, the most elementary and least elevated, *means* at least what Christianity on this view has not meant..

It must also be observed, that the men who bring this charge against Christianity are not generally infidels of a

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low class, mere vulgar beings. Some seem to be men of gravity, and the greater part of them men accustomed to reflect ; the very nature of their objection seems to speak favorably of their character. The charges which the mass of unbelievers bring against the Gospel are of quite a different nature ; and prior to discussion, we feel disposed to give the preference to those to whom Christianity seems deficient in spirituality and disinterestedness, over those who object to it because it does not gratify carnal sense and worldly inclinations.

But, in fine, brethren, whatever be the character of each, and however unequally our esteem may be divided between them, it is no less strange that Christianity should have encountered two charges so opposite to each other—that of exacting too much self-denial, and that of exacting too little. Might we not answer the charge of the latter by the complaint of the former, that old complaint which began with Christianity, and has been heard ever since ? And might we not afterwards meet the former with the complaint of the latter, and ask those who charge religion with harsh requirements, how it happens that others charge it with conniving at our selfish inclinations ? Is it not probable that a religion against which two contradictory charges are made, does not, in fact, deserve either of them, and that these charges by their contradiction only prove one thing, namely, that Christianity, in regard to its demands and its concessions, has stopped at the very point at which it ought to have stopped. This were only to reason and conclude as all the world does in a similar case. When we hear two contradictory charges brought against an individual, our first impression is, that neither charge is well-founded, and that he is equally removed from both the excesses of which he is accused. On stronger grounds might we thus judge of Christianity. For after all, the same man may, at different times and with dif-

ferent persons, be prodigal or avaricious, lethargic or passionate, and alternately merit the charges which could not be applicable to him at the same time. But Christianity is not a man, who may at different times differ from himself. It is a doctrine, which changes not with times, or more properly it is a fact, performed once for all, and which cannot from epoch to epoch be invested with a different character. So that, always similar to itself, it could not deserve to be censured for one thing to-day, and for its opposite to-morrow. Therefore, when it is attacked on both grounds, we must believe one of two things—either that an institution composed of two principles which contradict and destroy each other, may long exist and prosper contrary to the old maxim, “that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand;” or, that the two charges brought against Christianity are equally unfounded, and that between the two extremes alleged, it has kept the proper medium. You will judge, brethren, which of these two suppositions is the more reasonable.

But shall we confine ourselves to this reply, or even have recourse to it? No, brethren; for so far from repelling these two charges in the name of Christianity, we in its name accept both of them. We even go farther than they do. In our opinion, it is not going far enough to say that Christianity gives too much to interest, or too much to duty. Too much, a little too much, greatly too much, are vague terms; for these we substitute absolute terms. We say, (because it is true,) that Christianity gives every thing to interest, and every thing to duty. And we say that this must be, because Christianity, if it is true, must correspond with human nature in whatever in it is essential and ineffaceable. Against this nature, not against Christianity, ought the charges to have been made. Of the former may it be truly said that it contains two opposite principles, each of which is absolute, and claims possession of the whole soul. It indeed wishes always, and at every

moment, two contrary things. Observe that we are not here speaking of any individual man, but of human nature. Alas! how many are there who seem ever to wish but one thing—their interest! How few who wish at once, or conceive that any union exists between two things so different in appearance as their interest and the interest of God! But what the individual wills not, usually, universally, and uniformly, human nature wills; in other words, there is something in man which urges him at once to seek his happiness, and to make sacrifices; something which tells him at once that he is made to be happy, that he exists for himself and yet belongs not to himself. There is no person who does not find these two feelings, more or less distinctly, at the bottom of his heart. Who wishes to be half happy? Who thinks he can give half obedience? Who does not bear within himself an inextinguishable thirst for happiness, and an inexorable longing for perfection? And how can we belong equally to these two principles; in other words, entirely to ourselves, and entirely to duty?

Brethren, if we are to be astonished or offended at any thing, it should be first of all at this. Yet no one thinks of upbraiding human nature with this contradiction, because human nature is a fact in which nothing can be changed, and which must be taken as it is. But then, why feel astonished when that which is in man is found also in religion? Why should religion be suspected for reproducing a phenomenon, and not rather for not reproducing it? Why should this fact, instead of making us judge it false, not make us presume it true. No doubt it ought not to be satisfied with reproducing contradiction; no doubt it ought to solve it. But in order to solve it, it must recognize it; and when you see it, so far from distinguishing these two ineffaceable features in our nature, namely, the need of happiness and the law of sacrifice, avowing them boldly and openly, how great is the probability that

it has found the secret of reconciling them without weakening either the one or the other, or offering the least violence to them !

A false religion would escape from the difficulty by denying it ; the true religion recognizes it and avows it. Its task, its triumph, its glory, is not to obscure the terms of the problem, but to harmonize them, to convert into one feeling two feelings hitherto diverse and contradictory. All colors agree in darkness which destroys them all, but all colors melted together form the pure light which is only a union of all colors without being itself a color ; for every particular color is a commencement of darkness, and every color carried to the extreme becomes darkness. Well ; there are two facts in human nature which we have singled out as if they were two colors which religion undertakes to melt into one pure light. If religion is true, the second of these elements will under its influence absorb the first and the first absorb the second, holiness resolve itself into happiness, the desire of happiness be satisfied by holiness, the two principles become one same principle, and the two men who are in each of us be no longer more than a single man. For it is the same being who in each of us aspires to these two things, refuses to be divided, and wishes to find in the two objects of his pursuit, *himself, one and entire*. They are not two wants, but two names for one same want, which, having at the fall doubled itself, has, so to speak, made us double, created in each of us two different men, and given to our life a false character, because the change of our will has not been able to make any change in the nature of things, because every thing in regard to that which is without us has been calculated in accordance with our first condition and not our second, and the change which has taken place in us has not been able to make us find happiness in any thing but holiness.

Thus far, brethren, we understand the matter. Religion

finds the love of happiness and the principle of duty separated in us; and its mission, its masterpiece, is to reunite them. Religion, in other words, God only can do this; but we do not say that religion only can conceive or give us the idea. The idea is not beyond the power of reason.

The law, you know, is fulfilled in love. Man is what he ought to be, and has fulfilled his destiny, when he loves. Now, setting out from this point that the law is fulfilled in love, we ask if the love of ourselves or happiness is essentially opposed to love, and consequently to the law? How can this be, seeing it is the condition and starting point of all love? How can we love others without loving ourselves? How can we be alive to what touches them, if nothing touches ourselves? How could we comprehend their situation, their wishes, their hopes, if every situation was indifferent to ourselves, and we were incapable on our own account of forming any wish, or conceiving any hope? How would there be room for devotedness and sacrifice if we did not attach ourselves to any thing, and were indifferent whether we possessed it or not? How could we desire the happiness of others, if the desire of happiness was a stranger to our nature? How could we enjoy the happiness of others if we did not know what it is to enjoy? How, in fine, could we be separated from ourselves, which is the property of love, if we were not previously united to ourselves? In other words, how can we live in others, which is the property of love, if we do not first live in ourselves? You see, then, that this love of ourselves, so profound, so indestructible, so inseparable from ourselves that we could not ourselves exist without it, and it could not be destroyed without our own destruction, is the prop of all our sentiments, and lies at the foundation of all our affections. But this is not saying enough. It is not only at the foundation of our affections, it mingles with them and penetrates them; they are full of it. How will you prevent love, love the most gen-

erous and most pure, from being an interest and attraction ? Does not attraction presuppose some source of pleasure or of happiness in the object towards which it feels attracted ? Does it not necessarily find happiness in what it loves by the mere act of loving ? Do not these two ideas so correspond that it is impossible to conceive of love without happiness, since an object which did not give any sort of happiness it would be impossible for us to love ? On the other hand, it is very true that there is a contradiction between a premeditated search after our happiness and love. To love from interest is not to love. The terms cannot even be associated. Nevertheless this happiness, without being sought, is found ; what do I say ? was possessed beforehand and resided within. Happiness is not the recompense of love ; it is love itself. Love is full of happiness, is happiness. And now, if you suppose the soul attached, not to some special and passing object which may give it a special and passing happiness, but attached to its law (and which moreover, whether loved or not loved, would nevertheless be for ever its law ; ) if you suppose the soul loving its duty, loving holiness, loving God in whom alone all these are contained ; if you make what was its law to become its love, will you not have made its law become its happiness, will you not have ended the war between the two elements of its nature ? will you not have reconciled the love of self with the love of goodness, and happiness with holiness ? And does not this mere supposition make you comprehend that between the love of ourselves, taken in general, and the internal law of duty, there is no essential contradiction, and that there is no necessity of destroying, or even of restricting one of the two elements in order to make way for the other, seeing they are fitted and destined to form in our soul one single and common sentiment ?

While we say this of the love of ourselves, we do not say it of that other affection which, derived from self-love, is only

the abuse and corruption of it ; we mean, brethren, *selfishness*. The distinguishing characteristic of this affection is to seek its satisfaction in the isolation of the individual. And in fact the love of ourselves, in its purity, does not hinder us from uniting with the rest of the sensible creation, whereas selfishness separates us. The former expands, the latter contracts ; the former has its limits in all the beings of the world, the latter in ourselves alone ; the former allows us to multiply our existence by sympathy, the latter reduces us to an individual life, which thus reduced, is a death ; the former is a harmony, the latter a discord in the universal concert ; the former is truth, the latter falsehood : in one word, the latter is an abortion of the former. Such, brethren, is selfishness, to which every thing is an instrument, and nothing an end but itself. This bastard son of self-love is the father of a numerous and abominable family. Vanity, avarice, voluptuousness, all the passions which carry us back upon ourselves, which imprison and bury us in ourselves, are the detestable eldest sons of this impure race. But it is not here only that selfishness is reproduced and multiplied ; it is present in all merely natural affections. There it easily gains the ascendancy, and often exists alone. Alas ! the affection which on earth has become the type of love itself, *maternal affection*, is not always free from selfishness, a selfishness which is sometimes cruel.

Brethren, after these considerations we can no longer make it a question whether religion is permitted to make a man happy. It is clear not only that it can, but that it ought ; that if it is true, it cannot but give happiness, and that this is one of the principal evidences of its truth. But while admitting this to be its inevitable result, several will ask if it ought to announce it ; and, if it is worthy of it, to begin by offering it. Is not this, they ask, to appeal to the least noble part of our nature, and to fix our eye on the very point from which it ought to be diverted ? Ought it not first to speak of *holiness*, and leave happiness to follow in its train ?

Those who speak thus, brethren, forget what they have just admitted, namely, that happiness is necessarily united to holiness, that the tree has long borne its fruits, and that the lives of thousands of Christians have verified the words of our Saviour, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness;" and that this happiness, or at least peace, which true Christians enjoy, has conducted numbers towards the Gospel which must give them the same experience. So that though the Gospel should not speak of happiness, the happiness of Christians would speak of it.

But to those Christians themselves whose happiness makes us envy them, and who have become so without having seen or heard other Christians, must not religion have spoken of happiness? We know it is only too common for men when they invent theories, moral or political, to set out with supposing man as he ought to be rather than as he is. It seems to us, brethren, that something better should be expected from religion, and that sound sense must, if any where, exist in God. Now what is it that characterizes our actual condition? It is the loss of any relish for holiness, but certainly not the loss of a relish for happiness; it is not to feel strongly and distinctly enough that happiness is inseparable from holiness, but not, certainly not, to feel strongly and distinctly enough the profound and unalterable need of being happy. This is not a sentiment which our fall has enfeebled; here we are sure of being found, here we are sure of being captivated. Holiness is the goal: and is it from the goal that religion must start? The idea is absurd. By what then can it attract man, or secure his attachment without announcing happiness? Consider well what it is we speak of when we speak of religion. We do not understand by it a knowledge or sentiment which man receives and brings with him into the world at his birth; we understand a covenant between God and man, superinduced afterwards in order to repair the vice or imperfection of our



natural condition, and fill up a void in our existence. But how should a void which God alone can fill up not be felt? And how should this feeling not be one of pain? How then should not religion announce itself as a separation or a remedy? And if it is a manifestation of the love of God toward us, and a medium of this love, how can it be supposed that with such a design God addresses himself in preference to the least accessible part of our being, and knocks in preference at the door which we will open to him with the greatest difficulty? Is it not far more probable that his goodness will make him choose as a means of penetrating to our heart that door constantly and widely open of which we have spoken—the need and the love of happiness?

To make this innocent attraction a ground of charge against religion would be truly strange. Would it be better to abstain from using the only means which it has at its disposal, and in order to procure suffrages perfectly unimpeachable to be careful to conceal whatever in it is lovely and touching? Were you to say so, I know not whether you would be more severe on man or on God himself. Severe on man, to whom you seem to say, "It is of no consequence that you require to be counselled; it matters not that the whole creation, of which you form a part, and whose pains are felt in your bosom, 'groaneth and travaileth,'—It is of no consequence that you feel yourselves deprived of true peace, and for ever incapable of all true joy; your wants are nothing, and your duties every thing,—In the first instance, receive the law; thereafter let the rest come or not come; with this religion has no concern." Severe, we said, to God himself, to whom you seem to say, "O infinite love, curb, restrain thyself! Thou only desirest diffusion; but learn contraction. Thou wishest to speak to man of thy love, speak to him only of thy rights; thou desirest to win him by mercy, do not win him. Thou mightest inclose him in the meshes of

compassion, allow him to escape. Thou wishest to touch his feelings, touch them not. Do not offer him what he asks, offer him what he asks not. Infinite goodness, be only infinite holiness ! Love, be not love !”

But, my dear hearers, if religion does not address humanity in those words of consolation which humanity expects, what will it say ? What in fact is a religion, or what is religion ? It is consolation. The most complete collection of the most elevated moral precepts is not a religion. Morality only becomes a religion by hope. To give us a morality, even the most perfect, is not to give us a religion. Religion ought no doubt to contain a pure morality, and a perfect morality ; but morality, taken in itself, and confined to itself, the more perfect it is, is the less a religion. To make us better acquainted with the precepts of the law, is only to enlarge our responsibility and complete our distress. Thus God should have spoken only to produce despair. It is not enough that religion thus offers no attraction, it must as a consequence inspire terror. In fact you must come to this, you cannot stop half way. Not wishing it to be amiable, you must make it dreadful.

Examine the condition of the human race still more attentively. It requires not merely to be consoled but to be reassured. You are aware that the misery of man consists not merely in feeling himself far beneath the idea which he forms of his destination ; it consists, moreover, (though this is akin to the former,) it consists in feeling that he is justly and irrevocably deprived of the favor of the God whom he has offended ; in other words, in being obliged to figure to himself under different forms (and here how great the force of forms, images, and words !) his God as an angry God alienated from him ; it consists in acknowledging that with God, the sovereign good, true life and eternity will be lost ; in feeling himself, though alive, the prey of death ; in expe-

riencing here below the gnawings of the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never shall be quenched. It is vain to disguise or extenuate the fact ; such is the situation in the horrible reality of which conscience is continually placing us. Such is the subject of the first question which man puts to religion, and, not to disappoint his expectation, religion must at the outset either offer or promise reconciliation. We say, brethren, that it must, and that a religion which does not do so, which does not begin with this, is not a religion. We say that, supposing man not to know, it would be useless to acquaint him with the truth in regard to his destiny and his duty, without having previously assured him that God receives him into favor, that his life will be judged with a father's tenderness, and that the sins of the past and the imperfections attaching to all his works will not render his exertions and his zeal unavailing. A true religion ought therefore to be good news, a Gospel ; all religions have more or less pretended to be so.

Brethren, we have spoken boldly in the name of all ; we have supposed this feeling of condemnation and this need of reconciliation present in the hearts of all who are listening to us. Now we admit that, if there are any whose conscience tells them that they have never been separated from God, that they have always loved what he loves, and willed what he wills ; if there are any who have never been in arrears with God, and (how do I know ?) to whom God on the contrary is in debt ; in one word, if there are here men who are not men, men of another race than that of Adam, the argument which we have just employed is not applicable to them, and it is natural that they should not feel the force of it. But if their unalterable security has not rendered them insensible to a situation which is not theirs, we dare appeal to themselves, and ask them to say whether this religion, which cannot be theirs, is not such as the rest of mankind require ;

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and if in the wonderful condescension of God which it unfolds, there is nothing unworthy of God and unworthy of man. Ah! I admit it. If the prospect opened to man by religion was that of an earthly happiness; if God attracted, shall I venture to say *enticed* him by the allurements of carnal enjoyment and vanity; if it guaranteed to him in this world, I will not say pleasures and riches, but a peaceful, pleasant, and honored existence; if, even deferring the effect of its promises beyond the grave, it filled eternity with a worldly happiness, and transported earth to heaven, such a system might be so unworthy of man, (mark this, brethren,) that he would not choose to have it. At least none but degraded men and nations can to this extent allow their wants to be disappointed, and their hopes materialized. The misery of man is a sublime misery, and there is something holy in his suffering. What he seeks in religion is heaven and eternity, and, under the name of heaven and eternity, God. His heart and his life feel the want of God, it is after God that he hungers. But were this longing after God and eternity far less spiritual than we hold it to be; were it reduced, as in the case of most men it seems to be, to a longing for immortality and the fear of falling on their departure from the world into the hands of an angry God, do you consider even this longing to be unworthy of man? Do you think that his disinterestedness should go so far as to make him feel no concern about eternal reprobation? When you impose such self-denial, do you not make him more or less than a man, do you not make him a god or a demon? Is it not even probable that he who would cheerfully renounce all claim to eternity, and all prospect of possessing God, would be a demon rather than a god? And are you come the length of making it criminal in man not to love himself too much, but to love in general?

The thing unworthy of man would be not the acceptance

of these terms, but the rejection of them. There is no merit, I admit, in laying hold of an offered favor; and for that purpose no great effort seems requisite; but though the consent merits no praise, do we think that the refusal would not deserve blame? The whole question is whether pardon is really offered. If it is, we are not only infatuated, we are culpable in not accepting it. To repel a favor offered by God himself; to tell him by the refusal either that we can dispense with him, or that we are strong enough to defy his anger; to tell him that we will not have him for Master, Father, guide, or light; to tell him when he offers us the only means of union with him, that we set no value upon it; what is this, brethren, if it is not a crime, and the most dreadful of crimes? Say, then, whatever you please of the selfish aim of the Christian life, how can this aim be unworthy of man if its opposite would be so very unworthy?\*

But if there is nothing unworthy of man in the offer of reconciliation, how can there be any thing in it unworthy of God? However, brethren, let us take up this question as if it had not been already decided by the solution of the former.

It is necessary, no doubt, if this offer be worthy of God, that the happiness which is offered us in his name be fitted to unite us to him, that it do not concentrate us upon ourselves, but make us diffusive and communicative; in one word, that our happiness tend to contribute to the happiness of all, and the glory of God. Our happiness would be unjust, I say

\* "Art thou under the tyranny of sin, a slave to vicious habits, at enmity with God, and a skulking fugitive from thy own conscience? O how idle the dispute, whether the listening to the dictates of *prudence* from providential and self-interested motives be virtue or merit, when the *not* listening is guilt, misery, madness, and despair! The best, the most *Christianlike* pity thou canst show, is to take pity on thy own soul, the best and most acceptable service thou canst render, is to do justice and show mercy to *thyself*."—*Coleridge's Aids to Reflection*.

more, it would be false, precarious, and ruinous, if it did not take us out of ourselves, if it did not teach us to give ourselves to all, if it did not make us in some measure the prey of all ; in one word, if it did not become love, and if of this love kindled in our soul, God were not the primary object. For if we did not love God, the only being who deserves to be loved absolutely and for himself, we should not love any person with a true love, a love of charity. If we did not love God, we should not love those among men whom it is impossible for us to love otherwise than in God, and because of God. This is well expressed by St. John : " By this we knew that we love the children of God, when we love God ;" (1 John v. 2 ;) in other words, we are sure of truly loving our brethren, and even our nearest friends, only when we love God ; or rather, we are sure we do not truly love our brethren, or even our nearest friends, when we do not love God. In fine, if we did not love God, who is holiness itself, we would not love holiness, we would not love the law of God ; since the love of God is a vague unmeaning term if we do not love what is essential to God and makes him to be God. Hence an indispensable condition of the happiness which religion gives, is its disposing us to love holiness. Did it fail in this, it would, we repeat, be an unjust and false happiness, seeing it is not just that we should be happy out of order ; a false happiness, seeing that man out of the order for which he was created and organized, could not be happy except in appearance, and only for a time.

Now, what can be feared, or rather, what may not be hoped for the holiness of man, and consequently for the glory of God, from a religion which exhibits God as holy as he is lovely, as lovely as he is holy, and which, in expounding the law in all its purity and all its beauty, takes from it only what is dreadful and overpowering ? No doubt the promise of salvation does not and cannot do every thing, but when

this promise comes from the very God from whom we could only expect a sentence of condemnation, when a benefit immense and unmerited links us by gratitude to a Being whose eyes are too pure to look upon sin without abhorrence, will this gratitude, how little capable soever we may be of it, have no tendency to sanctify ? And if there were in us, in the very midst of our sins, some longing for purity and virtue, which should spring up from time to time in our heart and sink down again from not being sustained by hope ; if a servile and icy dread had till then suppressed the impulses of our soul towards the spiritual world and the things of God, will not the suppression of this fear, by the promise of grace, make new furrows in the soul, and deposit in them the blessed seeds of love and joy ? Will not the soul, thus sown and prepared by consolations from on high, become a fruitful soil in which every divine plant will henceforth grow spontaneously and to perfection ? Ah ! brethren, if it is so, the promise of salvation introduces into our soul an innocent and holy happiness. This happiness is worthy of God ; this good news, more than a forerunner, is an essential part of the truth ; and the remainder, I mean the rule of sanctification, although very important and well deserving of a continual study, flows from it spontaneously, proceeds from it like the branches from the trunk which bears and nourishes them.

Moreover, under what features has this salvation, whose good tidings have given it the name of Gospel, been presented to us ? We find in the Gospel, indeed, some sensible representations of the misery of the reprobate ; but do we find in regard to the happiness of the elect, any thing resembling the coarse pleasures of the present time ? Beyond the exclusion of the afflictions of the world, (a temporary exercise which comes to an end because the trial is accomplished,) what do ye find in this happiness of heaven ? Of what is it

composed? What is its principal element and essential feature? Is it not communion with God? is it not the free life of the spirit? is it not love? And is it not under these immaterial features that all true Christians represent it to themselves? Is it not in this character that they desire it and hope for it? Is it not in the possession of God that they rejoice? Do they aspire or lay claim to any thing else? And even now, as the object of their hope, is heaven any thing but love? What, in fact, would all the rest be? What can be desired by him, who, withdrawn for ever from the pains and wants of life, knows himself to be for ever united to God by the tie of a mental communion? Now, such being, in a Christian point of view, the character of the heavenly happiness or of salvation, this happiness being love itself, love being thus given to love in hope and prospect, how can we reproach the Gospel with having compromised the dignity of God by speaking to us of happiness?

After all this, brethren, we have no objection to hold that these properties of the Gospel do not give a sufficient guarantee, and that all our reasonings being held null and void, we be demanded to give facts. But, on our part, shall we not be permitted to demand from those who set no value on reasoning, and yield only to the evidence of facts, that when we produce facts they will be satisfied and desist from reasoning, and not attempt to argue against what is, by appealing to what they think ought to be? Christianity accepts the question as thus stated.—By promising and offering happiness has it secured love? or rather, by offering happiness, has it closed the soul against love? This is now the whole question.

But, in truth, is it a question? Must we now commence a process which was decided eighteen centuries ago? And when during the whole of this time, friends, neutrals, enemies even, have admitted with one voice that the true Chris-



tian is essentially a man of love and devotedness ; when the sublimest instances of self-denial and renunciation must be traced back to Christianity ; when all the lives expended in the ministry of charity have been, without exception, Christian lives ; when a thousand institutions, a thousand monuments, still present to our eyes striking evidence of the merciful spirit which Jesus Christ has deposited in his religion ; when, in order to make the pure and fresh sap of love circulate in the withered veins of the social body, recourse must uniformly be had to Christianity—can it be necessary for us to prove that the principle of happiness which it employs, so far from hurting, turns to the advantage of love ? Prove it ! Should we do so ? Are those who require such a proof, worthy of it ? Are they not jesting with us when they say they require it ? Should we not, by complying with their demand, be taking part in this foolish jesting, and becoming, to a certain extent, accomplices in its strange injustice ? Is not silence the only suitable answer, the only one which accords with the dignity of our cause ?

We leave the answer to those other enemies of Christianity who have been complaining so loudly and so long that Christianity consists entirely of mortifications and sacrifices, and by foolishly withdrawing us from ourselves, leaves us a prey to the first comer. These persons, brethren, to do them justice, have drawn their accusation from facts, and facts alone ; and the injustice of their charge consists in their not having looked into the spirit of the doctrine, which would have shown them a secret and superabundant compensation for the enormous sacrifices which amaze them, while the injustice of the others consists in having looked only at the interior of the doctrine, the abstract religion, and taken no account of the external facts which are the consequences of the doctrine. Is it not just, brethren, to leave the first to refute the second ; and these, in their turn, to refute the first ?

In particular, is it not just that those who charge the Christian religion with selfishness be called upon to explain to each other, and afterwards explain to us, why there should have been so old a clamor and so general a charge against the Christian religion of a nature the very opposite of that which they bring against it? I admit that when they have solved the difficulty we shall be bound to answer them.

But if the effects being recognized, if the presence of love in the heart and the life of the disciples of Jesus Christ being established, if the generous and tender character of Christianity being put out of the question, the charge be still insisted on, the charge that Christianity in order to produce these glorious and striking results has resorted to this instrument of happiness, or personal interest; if the scrupulous purity, we would say the puritanism of those with whom we are debating is still ashamed and scandalized at it, what will remain for us but just to send them away to do better, what will remain for themselves but just to try?

It is vain, therefore, to attempt to separate happiness from virtue, or, which comes to the same thing, to exclude the element of happiness from religion. Do as we may, it will find a place, and the only question is what that place will be. Whether it will follow in the train of obedience, or precede it. There is no other alternative. Mark this well, brethren; will you obey God in order that he may love you, or will you obey him because he loves you? Will you obey him in order to be saved, or will you obey because you are saved?

This choice God has not left to us. He knows well that if we were to be saved by obedience, we should never be saved. This is the reason why without regard to our first disobedience, and without waiting till we have become obedient, he first loved us, came to us, announced "Peace on earth," gave free pardon to all, after having pronounced the

sentence of condemnation upon all ; has concluded all under sin, that he may show mercy to all. Christ, the messenger of these glad tidings, was also their guarantee ; his incarnation, his sufferings, the shedding of his innocent blood, have stamped it with an immortal seal. A degraded race, which from generation to generation transmitted the curse, and was perpetuated upon the earth only to perpetuate disorder and rebellion ; a race which seemed to have preserved some traces of its primitive dignity and some remains of its dominion over creation only to disturb the designs of God, and by its presence and conduct interrupt the universal harmony ; this unhappy race in the dark wilderness of its exile has seen the paternal hand of God extended toward it. On its sunless horizon a bright and pure luminary has arisen ; a second Adam has become the head of a second humanity, in order that as in Adam all die, so in Christ Jesus all may be made alive. The Mediator, the distant hope of whom had cheered the men of ancient times on their passage to the tomb, has come in the fulness of the times to accomplish his mysterious mission, and claim from the height of the cross the fulfilment of the divine promise, " Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Ps. ii. 8. The nations belong to him, he to humanity ; he is prince and pastor, for his sceptre is a crook, and his subjects are sheep whom he feeds and carries in his bosom with a tenderness as great as the power with which he defends, and the authority with which he governs them. His reign is a reign of persuasion and love ; he wishes none but free subjects, he wishes only to reign over hearts ; he acknowledges for subjects those only who are united to him by faith, and are desirous to be enlisted to him only for peace, comfort, joy, and strength. He acknowledges for subjects only those who, acknowledging themselves to be sinners devoid of all glory

before God, and incapable of entering by their own strength and their own merits into communion with the Father of spirits, cry for grace and mercy at the foot of his cross, and expect nothing in earth or heaven except from his powerful mediation.

I readily admit that man could not have invented this system, and that it transcends our highest conceptions ; but after all, brethren, is not the system upon which, if we abandon this, we fall back, I mean salvation by works, too high for human nature and for every individual man ; is there an individual of our species who can embrace it seriously without embracing condemnation, and follow it out without arriving at despair ? And on the contrary, does not the other system which St. Paul has denominated in express terms foolishness, but the foolishness of God, give to man along with joy and peace a strength that was unknown to him ; does it not form in his heart that which he was searching for in vain, and which constitutes all his strength, that which is by way of eminence the work containing in itself all other works, I mean confidence in God and love to God ? Is not this foolishness which inspires holiness itself reason, and on the other hand is not the reason which produces neither holiness nor peace no better than foolishness ? And what although the element of happiness superabounds in Christianity, if this superabundance of happiness produces a superabundance of love ? In short, which of the two things is the more noble and the more generous : to work with a view to a reward, as in the system of natural religion, or to work in return for favor obtained, in other words, from gratitude, as in that system of supernatural religion which we term the Gospel ?

Were we to be told that very few accept these strange and sublime conditions, that very few obey from gratitude, alas ! we have told ourselves the same thing. Still those

who do obey, obey in Spirit and in truth ; and where are those who by another principle, whether duty or fear, have been brought to heartfelt obedience ? Who is it that obeys, if it be not he that loves ? Who loves, if it be not he who believes himself to be loved ? Number does not constitute truth, and were there only one individual upon the earth who had embraced the Gospel, in that one we should see humanity restored, the party of truth, the race of God. The question is not whether the conditions of salvation are accepted, but whether they are in fact conditions of salvation, and whether there is any other name upon the earth, any other principle, any other system by which men may be saved. Let us leave to God, then, the mystery of his ways, and the secret of his counsels ; let us no more doubt his love than his holiness ; where we cannot comprehend let us adore designs of which the great day will disclose to us all the excellence ; and let us content ourselves with accepting and blessing a dispensation, which, if not useful to all, was designed to be so ; which in the intention of God brings "salvation to all men," and to which nothing is wanting to make it so, both in reality and principle, than the will of those very persons in favor of whom God conceived and executed it.

It is now necessary to say, brethren, that if all this discussion, which might have appeared idle and vain in other times, has seemed called for in the present day, it is not merely because some enemies of Christianity, or, more properly, some men who do not understand it, urge the complaint which we have endeavored to obviate ; it is also because the conduct and language of several Christians in our day gives too much plausibility and force to the objection founded on the complaint. Yes, brethren, we say it with sorrow, there has gradually risen up under the very shade of the vital doctrines of the Gospel, and under the form of a

severe and vigilant orthodoxy, a Christianity which is only a theory of happiness and a system of personal safety. There are Christians who have mistaken the starting point in Christianity for the goal, and the means for the end ; and who, instead of going from happiness to love, stop at happiness, interpreting, to the dishonor of Christianity and their own shame, the declaration of Jesus Christ, that "the work of God" (or the work according to God) "is to believe in him whom he hath sent." These are the persons who by their unjust happiness and presumptuous peace offend the weak, embolden the enemies of Christianity, and give a color to the rashest and worst founded charge which ever has been brought against this holy religion.

We were anxious that this deplorable theology, this utilitarianism under the disguise of religion, should not turn to the confusion of Christianity ; and this is the reason why we have, to the best of our ability, shown on the one hand that the element of happiness contained in the Gospel, has nothing contrary to love, which is according to St. James, "the end" or sum "of the commandment;" and, on the other hand, that Christianity, in developing treasures of love in the human heart, has fully proved that it carried in itself along with happiness, and in happiness itself, a principle prolific in benevolence and charity. Let us do our utmost to announce, reiterate, and prove this great truth ; let us show in Christianity happiness and love united and agreed ; but let not our example contradict our language ; let it be felt that even in internal sorrow and tears those who speak of the happiness which Christianity gives, have really tasted it ; let it be felt, above all, that this happiness is religious, spiritual, free from selfishness, pervaded with love ; let it be felt that a first happiness has produced a second, that the happiness of deliverance has given rise to that of charity, that they have so melted down into each other that it has

become impossible to draw the distinction between being happy because we have escaped from the wrath to come, and happy because we have entered into communion with Almighty God our Father, who is at once all happiness and all love. Amen.

## JESUS INVISIBLE.

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"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you."—JOHN xvi. 7.

AT the idea of the persecution and sufferings which Jesus Christ had just set before his disciples in endless perspective their heart is overwhelmed. Amazement closes it against love. Taken up entirely with themselves, they think not of their Master. He himself, though present and close to each of them, requires to remind them of his presence, and putting into their mouth a question which they themselves ought to have asked, he says, "None of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?" And then anticipating, or following their thought, he himself answers the question which he had thus suggested, or rather another question which he perceives to be included in the first. "Whither goest thou" has doubtless this meaning: Why do you go away? Why do you not remain in the midst of us? Why do you leave us alone upon the earth? A question, brethren, implying great trouble and anxiety; a question which will appear very natural if we can put ourselves in the place of the disciples,



and which our Lord answers even before he has heard it, apparently without any expression either of reproof or surprise.

The disciples were not then what they afterwards became. Jesus Christ had constrained them, so to speak, to believe in his bloody death as an event certain, necessary, and near. But Jesus Christ was to come forth from the tomb, to re-appear among the living; and why, when he had resumed possession of life, should he not prolong his stay in the midst of them in the bosom of his Church? How could this Church dispense with him? What was to become of it, or rather must it not be annihilated by the absence of its Head? They find not in themselves any answer to these questions; or, to speak more properly, they do find one; they find in the feeling of their feebleness and unbelief the most disheartening of answers, and they are obliged to say that if the future prospects of the Church depend only on them, frail and shaking reeds, the Church has no future.

Such was their weakness that Jesus Christ could not, at least at this time and with his own mouth, fully solve the difficulty which rises in their breasts. His reply, though complete in itself, is to them necessarily incomplete and temporary. It calms and re-assures rather than gladdens and edifies them. The Master has spoken. That is something. The Master has explained that a great advantage is to result from his departure; this is much, if they have regard to the authority of him who speaks, but it is little for persons in such a situation as theirs, and (remarkable circumstance!) before they have received or enjoyed the compensation which is promised them, I mean the mission of the Comforter, they are not in a condition either to appreciate this compensation, or form an idea of it. It is for the Comforter himself to make them know the Comforter; it is for the benefit promised to furnish them by actual enjoyment

with the proper measure of its value. The words of Jesus are no doubt precious, precious as instruction, precious as a prophecy, the accomplishment of which will gloriously display the infallibility of the divine Prophet, but it is at a later period that its full value will be felt. At the time of delivery it is to the apostles like many other prophecies, "a light shining in a dark place."

Let us do justly, brethren; all of us would, like them, have been apt to ask Jesus, "Lord, why goest thou away? remain with us, Lord! for without thee we are nothing, and without thee we perish!" And perhaps we are tempted to ask even in the present day; perhaps the absence of Jesus, and of every visible sign of his invisible presence, alarms our faith, and this longing to *see*, which suggested to the heart of the disciples the mournful question, "Whither goest thou?" perhaps this longing agitates ourselves, and dictates to us on different occasions many objections, it may be many murmurings, analogous to the question put by the disciples.

Let us suppose, then, that the question is ours, and that the answer is given to us, the only difference being that we do not say like the disciples, "Whither goest thou, Lord?" but "Lord, why hast thou gone away, and why dost thou not remain amidst us till the end of time?" Let us listen to the reply of Jesus.

But no: before his reply let us listen to our own. He alone will tell us the whole truth, and even any answer which we might give ourselves comes from him. We are wise only with his wisdom. There can be no question of concealing any thing from him; but it may be proper to see whether before knowing the proper answer of Jesus Christ to the question of his disciples, we and they also might not have some means of accounting for the departure and disappearance of Jesus Christ.

Let us suppose, then, that the Son of man, in condescen-

sion to the weakness of his disciples, and our secret wish, had consented after his resurrection to remain upon earth until the last day of the last age reserved for its existence. He could not thus remain except to die daily, or to be forever triumphant. On which of these two alternatives must we fix? You know too well, brethren. Jesus Christ, always equally entitled to be loved, will always be equally hated. The same thirst for his blood will exist in all places and at all times; so that were Jesus Christ to appear successively in different countries, each of them would in its turn be moistened with his precious blood. Horrible to think, and horrible to say! Jesus, each time he sprung again from the bosom of the earth, (become his mother,) would again yield up his innocent and hallowed flesh to the wicked; all forms of execution would alternately be tried on his adorable body; all the fearful varieties of human corruption would be exercised, and, if possible, exhausted in this eternal parricide, and the Church called, according to the words of St. Paul, to fill up what is wanting in the sufferings of her Head; in other words, to represent and continue him in this part of his work, the Church would suffer with him, unless indeed she were, as the example of the first disciples might lead us to suppose, to flee far from his cross, leaving there at most some St. John to whom Jesus, more a stranger upon the earth than before, would not be able to give the charge of another Mary.

If it accords with piety to believe that the Son of God died once, the just for the unjust, if that is the very basis and foundation of the mystery of godliness, it is impious to believe that the Son of God could more than once be clothed with mortal flesh, and that the blessed seed of the woman was more than once to allow his heel to be bruised by the angel of darkness. Let us hasten then to reject this first alternative, though the most probable and the only one admissible,

and Jesus, as we have supposed, continuing to honor the earth with his presence, let us conceive that, instead of enduring an eternal passion, he is to enjoy an everlasting triumph.

He has conquered; while living and clothed with our humanity, he has put infidelity completely to flight. The hosannah of some hundreds of Israelites on the road to Jerusalem has become the cry of all nations. Jesus reigns; he is the King of all the earth; he is the King of kings. His peaceful dominion is absolute. He has no more enemies, no more rivals, and what has been emphatically said in the Jewish book of an earthly king is strictly true of Jesus: "The earth is silent before him." His kingdom, whatever he may have said to the contrary, is of this world. Still this kingdom, glorious as it appears, is but a place of exile. For if humanity before it attains to glory in the heavenly places is an exile for the just, how much more must it be so for the Prince of the just? Jesus Christ is not in his proper place, and therefore methinks I hear Him exclaim as in the days of his ministry, "How long shall I be with you?" The subjects of this King of the world have here an advantage over him, and it is found, though in contradiction to the very words of Jesus, that the servant is more than his Master. For Jesus Christ having suffered once, what can those around him have to suffer? A single look from him crowns them with glory; to have been seen and noticed by him, to have received from him an order, a question, a sign merely, is enough to be in the eyes of all other men something more than a king; fidelity always recompensed, always sure of being applauded, no longer costs any thing; the idea, and even the name of disobedience have disappeared from all minds; there is no longer, on the part of the friends of Jesus, either difficulty to be surmounted or struggle to be maintained. It is no longer by fire that men are saved, nor by much tribulation that they

enter into glory. The sacrifice is no longer salted with salt, or rather, there is no longer a victim. Religion is no longer a sacrifice; the blessing of the narrow way, and the kingdom of heaven taken by violence, are henceforth only empty sounds. After having asked what Jesus Christ is doing here below, it only remains to ask what his disciples are doing, and why, if we may so express it, earth is not already transformed into heaven?

Such are the replies which the most superficial knowledge of the Gospel at once suggests. Let us now listen to Jesus Christ. His reply alone is complete, and goes to the very bottom of the question. His answer alone can be called an answer. The question of the disciples had reference to themselves. "Why dost thou go away?" meant, Why dost thou leave us alone? what will become of us without thee? This is only part of the question which we have not already answered. We have omitted to place ourselves in the position of the disciples. The first thing which Jesus Christ does is to place himself in it, as is clearly shown by the very first words of his reply; "It is expedient for you that I go away." Let us see in what this expediency consists; an expediency not confined to the first disciples, but applicable to our case also.

"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

Remain with us, Lord, and we will be comforted. Such, brethren, would perhaps have been our answer; for we indeed feel a general need of consolation. Alas! in their unhappiest moments it is for being alive and existing that many would wish to be consoled. But who can console better than Jesus? Jesus absent is only one misery more, and who can console us for the absence of Jesus?

Jesus might have answered, Are you consoled? does my presence suffice you? is the void of your heart filled? is

the disquietude of your spirit calmed? have you peace? No; and yet I am in the midst of you. You can every day see me, speak to me, and hear me, and after your manner you love me; how is it, then, that while I am alive and present, something within you still cries for peace and comfort? Thus it appears you still require to ask, still to receive the Comforter.

Here the words following the text remind us that we must not give a strict interpretation to the term *Comforter*. The comfort in question is not merely that which compensates for a lost good, or makes it be forgotten. It is that which puts an end to the soul's solitariness, unites it to its object and its end, and puts it in possession of its true good. It implies all the light, strength, and life, of which it is susceptible; new eyes, a new heart, a second birth; the omnipotence of God in the feebleness of man. The Comforter is the Holy Spirit.

The signs or effects of his presence are numerous and varied. But as the object is to prove that the departure of Jesus is the condition of this Supreme grace, and that it is necessary for him (remarkable circumstance!) to *go away* in order to give place to the Holy Spirit, let us ascend from mere particular acts of grace which may seem to be compatible with the personal presence of Jesus Christ, to the more general acts which are the principle and source of all the rest. We shall then have no difficulty in understanding how these, and consequently all others, could only be formed and developed after the departure of the Son of man, and we will conclude with saying to this Divine friend, Yes, Lord, thy departure was necessary; it has been good for us that thou didst go away.

Two *consolations* of the Comforter, two gifts of the Holy Spirit, compose the whole new man. The one is faith; the other is that love in the Spirit of which St. Paul has said that

it gives life. Jesus Christ is the object of both, but it is on condition of becoming invisible to us.

The first of the gifts of the new covenant is faith. The property of faith is to attach itself before all and above all to what God has said, be it command, instruction, or promise, and whether written on some material substance or engraven on the tablet of our heart. To believe is to repose entirely on the infallibility and faithfulness of God; it is to place his testimony above all kinds of certainty or guarantee; it is to regard every word proceeding from his mouth as more substantial and real than the reality itself; it is in practice to regard duty in the form in which God has enjoined it as the clearest and most imperative of all obligations; it is, consequently, to go forward with unflinching eye, and meet coming events as we would meet God himself; it is not to ask for sight, but to consider sight either as the special recompense of faith, or as a merciful solace which God, when he deems it necessary, may concede to our weakness; it is, in terms still more general, to live in the Spirit, which is the best part of ourselves; to renounce the tyrannical domination of the senses, and uniformly look to the foundation, the very essence of the truth, instead of looking to external accidents or signs; it is to prefer the invisible, which is eternal, to the visible, which passes away, and the possession of the sovereign good to the sensible signs of its presence: in fine, in regard to what especially concerns Jesus Christ, it is to bless God that the Word was made flesh, and that eternal Wisdom dwelt with the children of men, but not to regard Jesus Christ, although perfect man, as an ordinary individual, whose presence is indissolubly attached to the body which represents him, as if he would be less present, less near, and less united to us when our eyes should cease to behold him. Now, such was the disposition of the disciples, and such, brethren, is human nature in general, that

had Jesus Christ remained upon the earth, faith, the divine principle of a new life, would have remained for ever in an infant state. Its case would have been that of a young bird whose parent will not permit it to try its wings. Men would have reposed on the corporeal presence of Christ; not upon his spiritual, which is his real presence. Even with a Jesus Christ, poor and humble, we would have walked by sight; the man would have obscured the God; the pure idea would never have been entirely disengaged from the external fact; all the thoughts of the Christian would have remained contracted and temporal; never would he have risen to that glorious liberty of the spirit which was to be the glory of the Gospel economy. In fine, the natural weakness of the disciples would have made them at every moment fall back upon this visible and present Jesus, who behooved, as such, to suffice for all our wants, and whose presence must therefore have made our state of minority perpetual. In regard to the present day, moreover, it would not be we who believed, but he who believed for us, who would live for us, and be the Christian while there were no Christians. The magnificent developments of the Christian Church would thus be strangled in the birth; or, to speak more properly, there would be no Christian Church; if by the Church we mean the assembly of those who walk by faith, and live in the Spirit.

After faith, I have named love in the Spirit. This is the second characteristic of the new man. He loves; but the essential difference in this respect between him and other men is, that he loves spiritually. All human affection is carnal in its principle. The *soul*, which is of the earth, is the seat of this love; it does not go the length of the *spirit*, which is the sense of divine things. To love spiritually, is to love as God loves and wishes to be loved. All in love that is only nature, instinct, taste, self-complacency, all that in love is



made in the image of the world and of time, disappears or is subordinate. Love, purified and made divine, rises and attaches itself to what is invisible and immortal ; it becomes at once more tender and more holy, more intimate and more respectful ; it loves God in every soul, and loves every soul in God. The believer who sees all things with the very eye of God, loves, if we dare so express it, with the very heart of God. And, to quote an example which brings us near our subject, almost all the world loves Jesus. Even the enemies of Christianity have a kind of love for Jesus. How is it possible not to love him who was meek and lowly in heart ; who loved little children, and loved the poor ; who chose to lead their life, and used his power only to succor and bless ? In fine, how is it possible not to love him whose gentle name, for the eighteen centuries during which it has been pronounced, awakens in all minds ideas of clemency and peace, justice and mercy ? But none of these men of the world, who after their manner love Jesus Christ, could have more love for him than the son of Jonas ; and do we not know that Jesus deserved to be loved otherwise than he was by St. Peter ; that though doubtless affected by his simple-hearted attachment, he however repulsed it, or at least restrained it ; and felt indignant at this disciple when he was unwilling that his Master should taste of death ? The affection of Peter was not spiritual ; that of the world for Jesus is, if possible, still less so. It is a human attachment which Jesus does not count sufficient, and which he cannot accept ; for this attachment does not contain any of the principles of the new life which he came to confer upon men, no spark of that fire which he hastened to kindle on the earth. This attachment does not lead to God. And how should it lead those whom, in the day when Divine wrath was threatened and pardon offered, it could not lead to the foot of the cross ? But this attachment remained human so long as Jesus himself

remained in a human condition. It could not take wings and fly away into heaven till Jesus himself should have ascended. Till then, Christ was only a person, and not the way, the truth, and the life. He was not loved as the way, the truth, and the life are loved ; but loved as a person is loved. The visible, corporeal, limited person, behooved to disappear, in order to make room for the idea which it represented, and at the same time concealed. It was necessary that the love of Christ should not be liable in any way to division or change. In one word, it was necessary that in Christ men should truly love Christ. Human weakness in some measure demanded this salutary privation of Christ ; a privation resembling that which the child suffers when the milk of its mother is withheld, in order to accustom it to more solid nourishment. The disciples at first did not understand this necessity, and how should they have understood it ? But shortly after they saw it as if it had been transparent. "I know no man after the flesh ;" exclaims the Apostle of the Gentiles, "yea, though I have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know I him no more." Do you hear ? He congratulates himself on the fact, and glories in it. Another man would have gloried of having seen Christ. St. Paul, who probably had seen him, sets no value on his bodily presence. He considers it far more important to inform us that he does not know him according to the flesh ; and this, doubtless, in order that he might teach us also to know and love him, not in that bodily way, but spiritually.

If faith and spiritual affection are the life of the Church, it was for the advantage of the Church that Jesus, instead of remaining in the midst of her, should go away. This has been well proved by fact. Where was the Church before the departure of Jesus ? Nowhere ; not even in the bosom of that college of Apostles who we have reason to believe knew Jesus far less, and loved him less completely than a

poor Christian peasant now knows and loves him. If, as we are too naturally inclined to believe, corporeal presence is of great moment, and far superior to remembrance, the Apostles, having Jesus in the midst of them, must have been stronger than the Apostles separated from Jesus. And then we ought not to forget that the Spirit (for we are speaking of the Spirit,) had not been given to Jesus by measure, and that he had full power to take of his own, and to give to his friends. Why did he not do so? Why had his lessons less effect on the Apostles than those of the Apostles themselves afterwards had on others? Why was not his mere presence equivalent to an abundant and perpetual effusion of the gifts of the Comforter? Why is it that we may say of Jesus what at a later period was said of St. Paul, "His bodily presence is weak, but his letters are powerful." For, indeed, the facts cannot be disputed. Before the departure of Jesus Christ there is no Church, but there is one immediately after. Those men who after a long residence with their Master, put questions to him, and start doubts which almost make us blush for them, are after his departure enlightened, intelligent, resolute men. This Church, in which he leaves only his remembrance, and in which the visible signs of his power lasted only a very short time, still subsists, and even now, amid the decline of all belief and the overthrow of all systems, is the only thing which has strength, life, and a future. It is at least evident that the existence of the Church did not depend on the visible presence of its Head, and Jesus knew well what he was saying when he declared to his disciples that it was expedient for them that he should go away. "What! shall we suffer less? Shall we be less despised? Will our task be more easy?" Methinks I hear them putting these questions, which, however, Jesus had already answered by anticipation. So far from suffering less they were to suffer much more, and suffer with joy. Such

is the advantage which they derived from their Master's departure. Facts thus afford a striking confirmation of what our Saviour foresaw, and prove that his departure was *expedient*.

But it is said that we suppress the miracle of Pentecost. We do not suppress it. Then it is said we overlook the meaning of the words, "I will send you another Comforter." We do not overlook it. We have not pretended that God is not the Master of his gifts, that he cannot withhold them, and that this one has no date. We believe that the manifestation of divine power on the day of Pentecost was necessary, and that nothing superfluous was then done; for the wonderful magnificence of God always restricts itself to what is necessary. But we have an important observation to make; it is, that God never forces any thing, never attacks our liberty, and that his grace is nothing but an eloquence altogether divine, a spirit speaking to a spirit, the Spirit of God to the spirit of man. He knocks at the door, but does not force it; he knows too well how to make it open. Though every thing is mysterious, there is nothing magical in the work of conversion; the laws of our nature are observed, and we cease not for one instant to be men. We apply this to the great revolution which took place in the heart of the disciples. It was the work of God, but this work God had himself prepared. God had rendered it naturally possible, by withdrawing his Son from the earth and reducing his disciples to mere faith and love. From him alone could they receive what they in fact received, but they could not receive it before their Master had exchanged his residence upon earth for the mansions of heaven: then only could their human confidence become faith, their human affection become love in the Spirit. This is all that we wished to establish, and we think that our trouble has been well bestowed.

The view of Christ risen, was decisive alike in regard to the calling of the disciples, and their future prospects. Without this view, nothing is possible ; and the Lord's tomb, empty though his friends knew it not, buried for ever both their hope and the Church. This event may suffice to explain their joy, their first ardor and devotedness. But let us not lose sight of the ideas which have been occupying our attention. What is Christianity when realized in the heart, but just the triumph of the invisible over the visible, and the reign of faith ? What is the new life which attaches itself to this principle, but just a love superior by its purity and spiritual character to all earthly loves ? The only question is, whether the germ of these two virtues, which constitute the whole of Christianity, could have been developed in a Church in which Jesus should have been personally present, even to the end of the world ? We have tried to prove the contrary, and our only remaining question is : If this is not the meaning of our Lord's words, what do they mean ? Apart from those ideas, how can we understand that it would have been advantageous for the disciples to see their Master go away, and that it can be advantageous to us to be deprived of his presence ? Without dwelling on the fact that the earth could not retain Jesus Christ beyond the term fixed by eternal prescience, do we not perceive that his presence prolonged, (we mean his corporeal presence,) might be an obstacle to the accomplishment of some of the ends for which he had come in the flesh ? Was not his departure the natural signal for the advent of the Holy Spirit ? And was it not when the earth should possess spiritual men, who are the people of the new covenant, when the works of the Spirit should be manifest, and its fruits abundant on the earth, that this same Spirit should be able, in the words of our Saviour, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ? We leave you, brethren, to answer these questions,

being impatient to arrive at the practical lessons which flow, as it were, spontaneously from our text.

Could we venture to maintain, brethren, that it was good for the disciples that Christ should go away, and that what was necessary and expedient for them is useless and bad for us? None of us certainly will say so. It is too evident that the situation, the wants, are still the same, and that we cannot any more than the Apostles dispense with the painful privation which their Master imposed on them.

No Christian whoever consents to it willingly. The resolution to do so depends on the measure of his spirituality, in other words, in proportion as Jesus Christ is possessed by the heart, is the distinctness of vision belonging to the eye of faith. But nothing is more universal or more natural than regret for not having seen Jesus Christ, than the desire of one day seeing him, I would almost say a feeling of envy in regard to the privileged persons who beheld him in the form of a servant. Forgetting how weak these persons were during the lifetime of their Master, and that all their strength dates from a period when their divine Head was no longer present on the earth, excepting by his Spirit, many imagine that they could do all with Jesus Christ were he to become visible, that there would then be neither doubt nor fear, that they would thenceforth be all ardor for the service of their great Master. That on a first impression man should think and speak thus, is conceivable, and may be pardoned; but after reflection how can they continue to use this language? and when they do use it, how far must they be from a full understanding of the Gospel!

What is the human body? A living statue. The body is an image, a memorial of the existence and presence of a moral being, to which through the body, so to speak, are addressed all the feelings which this being can inspire. That the soul never is without the body, and that their indissolu-

ble union is an essential condition, an ineffaceable characteristic of human nature, we entertain no doubt, and we have even the sanction of the Gospel itself, which does not speak of the immortality of the soul, as philosophers do, but of the resurrection of the flesh. This flesh, however, this organization, though necessary to enable man to manifest himself and fulfil his destiny, does not constitute the man. This we all admit when we refuse to estimate a man's worth by his body, or any thing apparently dependent on his body, and make it wholly depend on his intellect and will. How can the element which we refuse to take into account in the valuation be the man himself, the whole man? On the other hand, is not the man, the whole man, in that intellect and will, which alone we introduce into the account?

Moreover, in our attachments we rise superior to the impressions which body can produce upon body; the more we rise (if I may so express it) above the statue to the man whom it represents, the more we feel satisfied with ourselves. An affection on which neither the external decay of the object loved, nor its absence, nor death, would have any power, such an affection would justly be entitled to the highest honor. It would not, I admit, be love in the Spirit in the gospel acceptance, but nothing would more strongly resemble it, nothing be more proper to give the idea of it, or even according to circumstances originate the desire or presentiment of it.

If any being should be loved purely, it is undoubtedly the Son of God. The worship in spirit, which he has recommended and rendered possible, is nothing less than the spiritual adoration addressed to the Spirit. If the Son of God appeared in the flesh, it was not to make us adore his flesh or corporeal presence, but to dwell among us, to be man like us, to lead a human life, and submit to death. He has given this as a support to our love; but our love should at-

tach itself to that in him which thinks, invites, and loves. If it is not eternal truth and the eternal God that we love in Jesus Christ, we do not yet love him as he desires to be loved.

But since we are at this moment considering not so much principles as consequences, let us reply to those who exclaim, "O how strong we would be if we could only see Jesus Christ!" Alas! how many saw him, saw him at full leisure, and remained weak! So would it be with you, brethren, were Jesus Christ to appear and converse with you, if he did not at the same time communicate the Holy Spirit, which, as you know, was given to the first disciples only under the condition of his own absence. No doubt it was a high honor, as well as a great comfort to have seen the Son of man under the form of a servant, which is the foundation of his own glory. The first Apostles had so seen him; it was necessary for the execution of the apostolate; and we hear St. Paul, when misapprehended by a portion of the primitive Church, exclaiming, "Have not I too seen Jesus Christ?" But that has nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with the question which we are considering. The question is this: The Spirit having been able to supply the place of Christ, and complete his work, could Christ, by his presence, have supplied the place of the Holy Spirit? Could his presence produce in us what the Holy Spirit might not have produced in us, or could not produce? Nothing, absolutely nothing, authorizes us to think so. Any analogy would be deceptive. The mere aspect of a great personage, the mere report of his presence, has sometimes, on grave emergencies, exercised a decisive influence. But however great the results might be, they were human. The means and the effect were not disproportioned to each other. But spiritual effects demand a spiritual cause, and the fact of Christ's corporeal presence, considered in itself, is not so. There is no-



thing spiritual in it. If it did not absolutely exclude the agency of the Spirit, it could not supply its place; but we are satisfied that the establishment of the reign of the Spirit in the Church is dependent on the presence of Jesus Christ at the right hand of his Father, and not on his presence in the midst of us.

This absence of a visible and corporeal Christ is regarded as a privation, a loss. But it is the flesh itself, it is the charm of the present life that makes us deem it so. Jesus Christ absent is not diminished, or rather, though absent, is not absent. His Spirit is himself. He is wholly present in the presence of his Spirit. It has been said of a great captain, that his ghost could have gained battles; but the Holy Spirit is not the ghost of Jesus Christ, who left us more than his portrait when he left us the Comforter. And if it is true that a perpetual warfare is allotted to Jesus Christ on the earth; if, as we doubt not, he is ever engaged in fighting battles, it is not his shade, but himself, that fights and wins them. In giving us his Spirit, he does more than take of his own to give it to us, he gives himself; yes, just as personally, just as effectually as on that memorable day when the sun was extinguished in the heavens. He still gives himself, though without shedding of blood, in glory and in power, invisible to the eyes of the flesh, but visible to the eyes of the soul, and immediately and personally apprehended by faith.

It is true that the hope of Christ's *return* must have some value. Whatever may be the form of that return, in whatever manner Christ may manifest himself on the great day, it has been promised to our faith, and will make that day differ from those whose fleeting hours compose the period of our pilgrimage. There will be a manifestation, a sight. Sight has always been the recompense, the encouragement of faith. But the first thing necessary was to believe.

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Jesus Christ did few miracles, in other words, granted little to sight, when he met with much unbelief. After all, faith is life. Sight is royalty ; but in order to reign, and before reigning, it is necessary to live ; and sight is glory and felicity only to him to whom long before seeing it has been given to believe.

“ Enough of this,” you say, “ perhaps too much. None of us have the idea, far less the hope, of withdrawing the Son of man from the blessed light of heaven to make him dwell a second time in the sad darkness of this life.” I believe it, brethren ; but do you not claim something which, in effect, is the very thing which you disavow ?

If you presume not to claim the visibility of Jesus Christ’s personal presence, you wish it in some other manner ; in other words, you wish visible signs of his invisible presence.

If the signs for which you call are only those fruits of the Spirit, those good works, that holy activity which constitutes and manifests Christianity in the heart, assuredly you are right. These signs, and many of them, are required, and we have only one observation to make in regard to them, and it is, that these signs of the presence of Jesus Christ you ought in the first instance to ask from yourselves.

But it is not of this holy desire that we speak. There is another less pure, that which suggested to the Israelites the rash demand, Make us gods to walk before us. There is not a man who does not, at the bottom of his heart, ask gods who may walk before him, nor a Christian who, at certain moments, would not ask them if he dared.

What is asked is not (God forbid) something like the golden calf ; it is not even the ark of the living God, nor even the cloud. We are no longer in that position. What is it, then ? I will tell you. It is any thing which will give a distinct form and tangible shape to the spiritual kingdom which Jesus Christ came to establish on the earth.

In the first rank are the institutions and customs which time has consecrated in the bosom of the Christian Church. These circumstances, which are wholly external and are not the Church itself, we so overvalue that we mistake them for the Church : if certain barriers, certain words, certain sounds, happen to fail, we think it is the Church herself that fails ; it seems as if the strength of our communion, or Jesus Christ himself, is attached to these means or symbols, and that the event which has substituted for these other means, other symbols, has thereby deprived us both of that spiritual communion whose seat is in the heart, and of Jesus Christ himself, who is present in the midst of us only in so far as he dwells in our heart. We then feel, as it were, buried in darkness and lost in vacuity. We no longer know how to act ; the earth seems to give way under our feet, our heart melts within us, and we can scarcely help exclaiming, with the woman at the sepulchre, "They have taken away my Lord ; and I know not where they have laid him !"

Sometimes we consider Jesus Christ to be represented by men who are devoted to his service, and whom we believe to be penetrated with his Spirit. Every Christian, in a certain sense, represents Jesus Christ, and represents him the better the more implicitly he submits to him. The error lies in making a mere man the object of feelings which are due only to our Lord, and in regarding any instrument of whatever nature as necessary. This error is common, and alienates from Jesus Christ while it appears to pay him an homage of which he ought to be the sole object. How often in this manner is our adoration misplaced and led astray ! How often do we make the altar of the living God the pedestal of an idol ! And when the righteous hand of God throws down this idol and breaks it to pieces, when this man, supposed necessary, has disappeared, all has disappeared with him. He was the god who walked before us ; his inspirations

were all our wisdom, his voice, in spite of us, perhaps, had silenced the voice of the Spirit within us. Has he forsaken us? The silence is complete and the darkness profound. He had become to us unconsciously Jesus present, Jesus visible; and death, or absence, or some other dispensation, by removing away this man, has left us alone with ourselves, even after we had received the words of Christ, "I am with you to the end of the world."

The success, the internal prosperity of Christianity are also a kind of visible Christ to us. We are willing not to believe him absent so long as we see his religion honored, multitudes thronging his churches, society at least tacitly recognizing him as its head, infidelity blushing to avow itself, and hatred (for we cannot be ignorant that he has enemies,) blaspheming only in secret. Our faith takes courage at the sight; alas! this sight is all the faith possessed by the greater number. How readily our hope fails, and our faith is shaken, how soon we fall away, when, in consequence of any great change in the condition of society, enmity grows bold, and of a sudden "the hearts of many are revealed!" In all this, however, there is nothing new. Jesus Christ has no more enemies than he had; those who are hostile to-day were so yesterday; the only difference is that they are now known, and know themselves. But the very circumstance of its being believed that Jesus Christ has more enemies, diminishes the number of his friends. What do I say? It seems as if this host of enemies had carried Jesus Christ away. Like Enoch, he disappears and is not. It seems as if he had never appeared, as if he had never been, and as if, dreadful to say, his removal from the earth took away not a real being, but a name! After hearing and hearing again that the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, that the Church is not the world, that the doctrine of the cross is to the natural man

foolishness, that the truth is always offensive, and that to the end true believers will be a small and select number, that humiliation and contempt are the inheritance of the Church upon earth, all this fades away from the memory, and it plainly appears that these expressions had hitherto been used without being understood or believed. All are not shaken in an equal degree, but the firmest feel their knees bending, and more than one of those who still believe, (because faith cannot die,) more than one cries to Jesus, as the disciples once did, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent!" Luke xxiv. 29.

But Jesus Christ, who cannot permit us either to serve him as an idol, or to put idols in his place, or to seek indubitable evidence of his presence any where but in ourselves; Jesus Christ, as on that day when the multitude erroneously wished to make him a king, "withdraws to a mountain." By this new retreat he extinguishes the bright light which he had kindled; he obliges us to seek him on the mountain, in other words, in our faith, and constrains us to look at him with other eyes than those of flesh. Those days, strongly resembling nights, are days of trial, but thereby days of blessing. True faith is astonished, we admit, but it recovers itself, or rather recovers the invisible Saviour from whom it had allowed itself to be drawn far away towards reflected objects and symbols. A similar day has been given to us. The darkness is gathering. The lights are being extinguished. The world is more completely than ever the world, and Christians are again in its eyes a peculiar people. It is not the substance but the aspect of things that has changed. The respective amounts of faith and unbelief have doubtless somewhat varied; but unbelief has with many changed its character; it is serious, it affirms, it believes, it removes mountains. These mountains will crush it to pieces, for it is strong only in denying, and when it rises to affirmation, it

calls forth a unanimous and crushing denial from facts and from nature. Be this as it may, what grounds have we not for saying to the power of falsehood, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." Luke xxii. 53. This is one of those evenings, those gloomy evenings, in which the Church requires to be illumined by the light which she carries within her, but it is also one of those evenings whose darkness, so to speak, kindles a thousand fires in the sky of the Church. Do you not see them one after another start up and illumine the darkness? Do you not see life and motion springing up on every side, a reviving interest in the works of which the glory of Jesus Christ is the object, the spirit of enterprise and conquest again becoming the spirit of a Christian people so long a stranger to the divine impatience which sees the fields already white, though others think there are still three months till harvest? Who would dare to say that the Church, the true Church, ever dies? None, not even its proudest enemies. What although the flame burns flickering, and on a narrow hearth? What matters it if it is as pure, as vigorous, as devouring as ever?

Brethren, let us, with all the strength which God has given, resist the dangerous temptations of that "lust of the eye," which, from our carnal nature, we carry even into the purest of religions. Majestic power, ancient memorials, space and number, brilliant actions and fascinating talents, are all so many modes in which we would have Jesus Christ to become visible to our eyes. Notwithstanding his glorious ascension, we insist on clothing him in mortal flesh, in order that we may be able to know, according to the flesh, him who desires to be known and loved only according to the Spirit. We invest him with a mortal flesh, and thereby make him mortal. Yes, we render him subject to death a second time, and for ever; and when he does come to die in that flesh with which we have against his will invested him,

alas! is there not ground to fear that he will also die in our hearts? Bible Christians, we look with pity on the believers in the *real presence*, and yet we differ from them only in form, since, like them, we call up a Jesus Christ in flesh, in order to secure his dying still more certainly on the altar of our hearts. A taste, a love, a reverence for the invisible, is still rare among the very men who are always repeating that they must set their affections on the invisible realities of eternity, and that their true life is hid with Christ in God. Brethren, we have all, in this respect, much progress to make. May we desire it! May we ask it! This were almost to have accomplished it.

## GRACE AND FAITH.

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"By grace are ye saved, through faith."—EPHESIANS ii. 8.

ST. PAUL addresses these words to the Ephesians, who had formerly been idolaters, without God and without hope in the world. There was no need of any particular circumstance to determine him to speak to them in such terms. In doing so he simply announced to them the Gospel, whose doctrine, vast though it be, is all summed up in the words which we have read. It is probable, however, that in this place they have a special emphasis. The new converts, surrounded by Jews and intermixed with Jews, were in danger of receiving the most pernicious influences even from those Jews who had, like themselves, embraced Christianity. The Jews, with their traditions and their legal spirit, might intercept the rays, or at least some of the rays, of Gospel light. For, even in accepting Jesus Christ, the ancient disciples of Moses were desirous to owe somewhat to their works, and to be, up to a certain point, saved by their works. In this way the glad tidings were no sooner proclaimed than they were in danger of being altered and denaturalized. It is to this dan-



ger, or perhaps already flagrant abuse, that St. Paul opposes the authority of his word. Whatever others may say to you, (he seems to cry to the Ephesians,) whatever others may allege, be assured that you are saved not by your merit, but merely by grace; not by your works, but by means of faith. This same voice administers rebuke at all periods to those Jews (Jews, not by birth, but in heart,) who persist in incessantly speaking of righteousness when there is room only for grace, in pluming themselves upon works instead of leaning upon faith. For in the error of the Jews the Apostle has discovered two errors, to which he opposes two truths. The Jews pretend to save themselves. This, when properly understood, means that they have no need of being saved. Salvation, for which their merits will pay, is in their eyes a matter of strict right, and pure justice. The answer to them is, No; but grace alone will bear the expense of your salvation. The Jews rest in their works, (that is, in works properly so called,) in an external display of their own powers. No, says St. Paul, your works, be they what they may, your works, as works, will not be imputed to you; your faith only will be imputed. Only by grace and by faith can you be saved. Does this mean, brethren, that there are two methods of salvation? Does grace perform one half of the work and faith the other half? The very words of St. Paul forbid such an idea. They evidently ascribe the whole of our salvation to grace, or to God. "You are saved by grace," says he, and shortly afterwards, "that not of yourselves." And yet he also says, "Ye are saved by faith." What has faith to do here? In what relation does it stand to grace? How does it allow grace to subsist in all its fullness? How can a man be saved by his faith, (for the faith spoken of is certainly *his* faith,) and yet owe his whole salvation to grace? It is this, brethren, that we wish to explain. In general, it is of importance to every Christian,

and to every man, to have a full understanding of that part of theology which treats of grace and faith. Let whatever in it is impenetrable remain impenetrable, but let that which is made to be understood be well understood. Let us beware of supplying the place of ideas by vain words. Let us have the key of our treasury, and venture to open it. Let us learn from the Gospel, and from experience, what are the true, natural, and inevitable relations between faith and grace. Let us thus avoid those misunderstandings which freeze or irritate the heart, and usually do both.

You are saved, says the Apostle ; consequently, you were lost. This last is not a simple idea. The loss of man is compounded of two elements, or presents itself under two aspects. Man is condemned, and he is dead in trespasses and sins. But are these two facts merely in juxtaposition ? Have they no more intimate relation ? They have one so intimate, dear brethren, that the real difficulty is, not to connect them, but to discriminate between them. Wherein does condemnation consist ? What is, so to speak, its sum and substance ? Is it not, before all and above all, our spiritual separation from God ? To what punishment more severe than the interruption of all communication with God could a being be subjected who is made for God, and can no more live without God than the bird without air, or the fish without water ? Now, this perpetual paralysis of the moral being is nothing else than that death which we lately mentioned in the words of St. Paul, that spiritual death into which sin has plunged us, and to which we had doomed ourselves before God had condemned us. Condemnation may include more, but it certainly includes this death ; and this death is necessarily the principal part, the very foundation of condemnation. However, brethren, in a certain point of view condemnation and death are really two, as God and man are two. If, in considering the lost estate of man, we look

at the justice of God, that loss is condemnation ; if we look man, the chief part of the loss is death. Man is lost in senses, in denying God, and in being denied by God ; lost this twofold abandonment, this reciprocal repulsion—flight, if we may so express it, of the Creator away from creature, whose wickedness offends his holy eye, and of creature from the Creator, of whom he cannot think with mingled feelings of terror and hatred. This is what called the lost estate of man, and such is the abyss into which the Apostle saw the Ephesians delivered when said to them, “Ye are saved.”

You were lost. Is the whole meaning of these words merely that you were exposed to danger, seriously threatened, promised, eclipsed, though not extinguished ? No ; the words, in regard to punishment, signify condemned *final* without appeal, and without resource ; while, in regard to moral degradation, they signify dead, a term to which nothing can be added. When you shall have seen a tree which rooted up and cast away from its place, return, replant it and take an erect position, you may believe, though without comprehending it, that man, equally rooted up, may by him plant himself anew in the land of reconciliation and life, resume his ancient place and ancient honors in the garden of God. In this passage, then, the meaning of the word is complete, absolute, irrevocable. There is no resource now at least, which any man can imagine or foresee.

And now, says the Apostle, you who were lost are saved. I do not stop to inquire whether in the eyes of St. Paul the Ephesians were in the state or the way of salvation at the moment when he said to them, “You are saved.” These words certainly mean that the whole cost of their salvation had been paid ; that all which could be done without them had been done ; in a word, that it depended only on them to be saved. But we do not even insist on this interpretation

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of the apostolic declaration, however probable it may be. We are willing only to find a single idea which every person will surely find in it as well as we, namely, that there is a salvation, a means of escaping from condemnation, and being delivered from death. This means is called grace, and it is also called faith.

No, brethren; we express ourselves improperly. The means invariably lie between the effect and the cause, and connect them together. Now, before grace can be a means, there must be something beneath and something above it, whereas there is certainly nothing. Grace, therefore, is not the means of our salvation; it is the principle, the source, the reason, the cause of it. Our salvation proceeds entirely from the grace or merciful will of the Father of spirits, just as the bird proceeds entirely from the egg, and the fruit entirely from the branch, though heat is necessary to hatch the egg, and a hand necessary to gather the fruit. Grace is therefore the cause, the source of salvation; faith is only the means, or if you will, there are two graces; one which is performed out of us, and which the Apostle calls simply grace, and another which is accomplished in us, and which the Apostle calls faith. In principle, grace is one; but it has different moments, different places, different forms. There are several gifts, but the whole is gift. Grace out of us, grace in us; such is the Gospel.

Thus, then, the terms of the text do not designate either two means, since grace is not a mean, nor two halves of a whole, since grace is the whole. Grace is the whole, of which faith is a part. You are saved by grace; this is the general truth. You are saved by faith; this is the particular truth. In other words, it is necessary for the completion of salvation that grace produce faith.

But since it is evident that in grace all is not faith, it is natural to ask, prior to and independently of faith, when faith

as yet does not exist, what is there? Or, in other terms, before giving us faith what has God given us? what has God done for us?

He has pardoned. Here the terms and even our conceptions fail; for the eternal God must have pardoned from all eternity. He remitted the debt before it was contracted. Before striking the blow he was appeased. Let us bow our heads before this mystery, and freely speak the language which God permits us to speak. God has pardoned. The term does not seem to need explanation. Every one understands that to pardon is to remit the punishment which an offence had merited, is to restore the offender to the position in which he was before he offended. Such is the intention of pardon; and if we consider pardon only in its intention, the idea of a man who pardons, is sufficient to make us conceive the idea of a God who pardons, and to say the truth, it is only by the former that we can rise to the latter.' But if we look to pardon as a completed act, to pardon made effectual, an important difference presents itself. A sovereign who grants pardon, an individual who renounces vengeance, have not less conferred a full and effectual pardon, that the object of their clemency remains the same absolutely, and the same in respect to them, or that he experiences the effect of their generosity without knowing the source of it. Changed, or not changed, he is nevertheless pardoned. Such is the case in regard to this world's affairs. But we have not yet forgotten what is meant by man's being lost. To be lost is not only to be condemned, it is to be dead in trespasses and sins, and this spiritual death of itself constitutes his condemnation. To remain in this death, is to remain in condemnation. Condemnation unaccompanied by this death would be impossible; it would no longer be condemnation. For there is no real condemnation to him who enjoys that communion of thought and will with God, which is the life

of our soul just as a separation from him is its death. From this you doubtless perceive that this change of heart, the absence of which does not nullify a pardon granted by man to man, is essential in the work of mercy by our heavenly King. This change is not a previous condition of pardon or of grace, the characteristic of which on the contrary is to be unconditional. This change of heart, thought, and life, this change of the whole man, this new birth, is the realization, or, as we might call it, the very substance of pardon, just as spiritual death is the essence of condemnation. And it is in this sense that an Apostle has expressed the fact of redemption in the following terms, "You were . . . redeemed . . . . . from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers." 1 Pet. i. 18. And another Apostle, setting before the view of his disciples the final recompense of their fidelity and accomplishment of the promises of God, tells them that God "did predestinate" them "to be conformed to the image of his Son." Rom. viii. 29.

The two ideas of pardon and regeneration are thus united as closely as the two ideas of condemnation and spiritual death. I do not say, be careful to observe that this spiritual death, this living death, is the *whole* of condemnation, or that this regeneration, or this new life, is the *whole* effect of pardon; I only say that spiritual death is the principal element of condemnation, and that the regeneration of the heart is the consummation of grace, and the very foundation of salvation.

This does not oblige us to confound what is distinct, and requires to be distinguished. The remission of sins, the abolition of our debt, the declared purpose to regard sinful man as innocent, in one word, pardon sealed and guaranteed by the greatest of sacrifices, all this is something else than the gift of the new birth; but after making these reservations, we may be permitted to make a supposition. Let us

suppose that the merciful desire of our Creator had remained concealed in his own bosom, or rather let us suppose that the amnesty had remained a secret between the eternal Father and the eternal Son ; let us suppose that in order to procure this pardon, and these letters of pardon, the well-beloved of the Father had shed his blood, either in some other world far beyond our ken, or if you please on the earth, but without our knowing it. Every thing is finished ; only we are not aware of the fact, we do not even know that any scheme has been devised. Are we saved ? You might tell me that in virtue of these great measures, although they are unknown to us, we shall not on quitting this world be subjected in the other to the punishments with which we thought we were threatened. This I admit ; but I again ask, Are we saved ? Are we saved even though our ignorance should not then cease, nor the good will of God be revealed to us, though, in a word, the Gospel be not preached to the dead ? Though the Gospel should not have given you any light on this subject, you would reply, No ; we cannot be saved by a grace which does not change us, and we cannot be changed by a grace which has not been revealed to us.

None of you I believe will controvert me, none will even call for a proof of my averment. I suppose for a moment that some among my hearers are not Christians, but that all have a sincere respect for the principles of the moral law. I shall thus have two classes of hearers, and I shall have the assent of both. Those who are Christians will not maintain that true happiness, and consequently eternal happiness, (for it is eternal only because it is true,) can be the portion of creatures whose heart is still separated from God, and hostile to God. They know, they feel the contrary, and though their faith forbids them to make any human merit the legal condition of salvation, they are fully convinced that holiness is an integral and essential part of salvation. And as to the other class, the *mo-*

*realists*, (if they will allow us to call them so,) it would be to abjure their principles, and abjure them gratuitously, to suppose it possible that there could be happiness beside God without being happiness according to God. Both might readily admit that the amnesty of which we speak might have taken off some material inflictions ; but this amnesty being unknown, and therefore incapable of acting upon the heart, (where, notwithstanding, impious hostility would subsist,) could not secure the blessedness of heaven ; it could not prevent man, while remaining the same, from being inexpressibly and eternally miserable. To prove the contrary would be to prove that God is not holy, that God is not God.

Now, it being once admitted that the work of redemption is illusory if it is not revealed to us, and that "my righteous Servant," as Isaiah speaks, will justify many by the knowledge which they shall have of him, (Is. liii. 11,) we have only to advance a single step in order to establish the necessity and determine the office of faith. There is this common between him to whom the pardon has not been revealed and him who does not believe in it, that they are both *ignorant*. The unbeliever is ignorant like the other. Not believing he knows not, and all the advantages which may result from knowledge are lost to him as much as to the other who is simply ignorant ; and in so far as a supreme happiness is attached to those spiritual advantages, which, to say the truth, are the basis and foundation of this happiness, neither the ignorant nor the unbelieving is fit to enjoy it ; or, as our divine Master expresses it, neither of them is fit for the kingdom of God.

But it is only in one respect, and for the time, that we have been able to place the unbelieving and the ignorant in the same position. The former, who has received an offer of pardon and rejected it, is certainly in the worse condition. No man has a right to the amnesty, but one may be doubly



unworthy, and this is the case of him who has refused it. What will be the final condition of involuntary ignorance, I know not, and seek not to know; but one thing I know well, and it is, that as he who knew the will of his Master and did it not will be beaten with many stripes, so will it be with him who knew the good will of the Father and did not accept it. In so far as the amnesty which invites offenders to provide themselves with their letters of pardon against a certain term has been clearly and regularly promulgated, in so far as he who has not availed himself of it will not be able to plead ignorance, the amnesty in regard to him justly falls, and leaves him to return to the unhappy condition in which he was before its promulgation. He was not excluded from pardon, but he has excluded himself; he has *relapsed*, and his last condition is worse than the first. There is pardon for all sinners, but not for the sinner who remains impenitent.

But, brethren, instead of digressing let it simply be our object to consider positively what the relations are between faith and grace. We say truly that grace is complete in itself; it is the gate of the paternal mansion again opened wide, and the riches within are given without distinction to all who will enter. Grace is the guilty regarded as innocent. Grace is the abolition of the past, and a new starting point given to human life and human nature. Grace—it is children again finding their father, and a father again finding his children! But in order that this grace may be realized, it is absolutely indispensable that he who gives it should also give the knowledge of it. This is necessary, unless indeed we insist that the happiness of heaven is altogether material, in which case undoubtedly previous knowledge would be useless, the heart of man not requiring to be changed in order to enjoy a material happiness. But a happiness of this kind would be unworthy of God, and even if the whole truth must be told, unworthy of man. Now

what is the happiness of heaven? A spiritual happiness. We need only see how the Scriptures designate it. To see God, to see him as he is, to be conformed to him, to know as we are known, to possess the inheritance of the saints in light, the external peace of this new state where there are no more tears, nor crying, nor toil, only completes the idea of this felicity, but does not constitute it. Now, who can enjoy this happiness save he whose heart has been changed? and what hearts can be changed, save those who learned upon the earth how far the Saviour loved them, and in what manner he has assured them of his love? And this is the reason why faith forms part of the grace which saves, and why St. Paul said to the Ephesians, "By grace are ye saved, through faith." Faith is the hand by which we seize the pardon, the promises, the love of the Father; and the providing us with this spiritual hand forms the second act of divine charity, the second miracle of grace. Faith is the mysterious ingrafting which makes us to become branches of the Vine, which is Jesus Christ, from whom, in consequence of our union with him, we thenceforth derive all our nourishment, his life becoming ours. It is sufficient to know him in order to understand how faith saves.

It is true, dear brethren, that I have hitherto spoken more of knowledge than of faith, and that I have not distinguished them from each other. It is because *faith is knowledge*; and it is under this point of view that I wished at the outset to present faith. But if knowledge and faith resemble each other, inasmuch as knowledge is included in faith, it is however of importance to discriminate them. All knowledge is not saving. It might even be said that it is not knowledge which saves, but faith; and that it is necessary for the accomplishment of our salvation that knowledge should become faith. Two things are necessary; knowledge itself, and a certain manner of knowing. How many are there who

know, and yet are not in the way of salvation ! It is because their knowledge is passive or inert, a knowledge in which will, morality, and the soul, pass for nothing. It is because they have *seen*, but not *tasted* that the Lord is gracious ; it is because they have not taken the proper measure of their misery so as to enable them to measure the extent of his love ; it is because they have taken up their belief without either repugnance or affection, just as they would have accepted any thing that happened to be first presented ; it is because, in the acquisition of this treasure, they have employed the paltriest faculties, the mere surface of the soul ; it is because, borne aloft on the shoulders of the slaves called prejudice, authority, and custom, or carried along in that rumbling chariot called logic, they have performed a journey which they ought to have performed barefoot, or rather on their knees, over cutting flints, thorns, and briars. In other journeys the end is the important matter, here it is the road. When the truth is known only as they actually know it, it is not known at all. We cannot handle a delicate substance with a hand of iron or wood. Death cannot appropriate life. The act destined to bring us into unison of thought, will, and habit with Jesus Christ, must be a moral act. Faith is a desire, a homage, a promise, almost a love. It is at once all these, and at the same time is all that is most simple, a look of the heart towards the God of mercy, " an earnest and intent consideration of Jesus Christ crucified," the committal of all our interests into his Divine hands, tranquillity of mind and heartfelt peace in the assurance of his love and power, our hand placed with childlike confidence in his as in that of a protector and guide. Such is faith. It may set out with historical certainty, but this certainty is not faith. It may remain in the state of opinion, but this opinion is not faith. It may be reduced to a popular prejudice, but this prejudice is not faith. To believe is to

confide ; to believe is to rely upon God. Thus Abraham believed, and it was this faith and this alone that was imputed to him for righteousness. Who does not perceive that such a manner of knowing is the principle, the imperishable germ of a new life, and that we are in fact saved by knowledge ?

Christianity has excluded works as a ground of our assurance. I mean external works ; for St. James could not have deviated from the true path when he said that we are "justified by works, and not by faith only." Ah ! who sees not that it will be necessary for us at the last day to be able to produce works as the evidence of our faith, and that, at least in this sense, works justify ? Accordingly, it is written, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord ; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them !" But if it has been justly asked, What kind of faith is that which produces no works ? may it not be as truly asked, What kind of works are those of which faith is not the principle ? what kind of works are those of unbelief ? what kind of works are those done by a proud and impenitent sinner ? what kind of works are those of a being who has rejected the love of God ? what kind of works are those which are not offered to God ? True faith, then, will produce works, and the works of faith will be true works. But, indeed, it seems to me that those who cry loudly for works, and works to the exclusion of faith, are very fastidious on the subject of works if they do not recognize in that very faith which includes so many efforts, presupposes so many struggles, and employs so many powers or works, the first of works, and, so to speak, the work of works ; the profoundest, richest, most pregnant, and most fruitful work of which a human being is capable ; an act which includes every thing which ought to be done, and excludes every thing which ought not to be done, and which prepares the human soul for the encounter of all difficulties and the accomplishment of all duties. Some persons must

be very fastidious in the matter of works. Those which they despise and reject will one day, in the presence of God, absorb all the works of which they boast, just as the serpent of Moses swallowed up those of the magicians.

When I represented faith as a life of the soul, I told you, by anticipation, that faith admits of degrees. Between believing and not believing, in other words, between possessing and not possessing God, there is doubtless an abyss as between life and death; accordingly, we cannot be more or less saved. But though we cannot be more or less dead, we may be more or less alive. We may believe more or less, we may know more or less, feel more or less, enjoy more or less, be more or less in health. There is progression in the life of faith, as in every life; and this progress is even the condition and the sign of life. Faith may increase in certainty, clearness, vivacity, and energy. It was probably this that the disciples asked of Jesus when they said, "Increase our faith." It was in one or other of these respects, perhaps in all these respects, that St. Paul desired to add to what was wanting in the faith of the Thessalonians. It was this progress that St. Peter had in view when he said, "Grow in knowledge." For in religion, to believe and know are one and the same thing. The measure of faith is to each the measure of peace, charity, liberty and life. We are bound always to desire more than we possess, and if any one is not anxious about the measure of his faith, that is, his union with God, it may be said that he is not anxious about salvation, and that he has not yet, to use the emphatic expression of St. Paul, laid hold of eternal life.

It is thus, my beloved brethren, that we understand the relations between grace and faith. Grace is the object of faith; faith is the completion of grace. But will we be allowed to conclude without meeting with any objection? Will nobody be found to tell us that the object of faith is not

a disembodied fact, but a person, even Jesus Christ ; and not a part of Jesus Christ or of his work, but of Jesus Christ as a whole ? The question which the first preachers of the Gospel addressed to their hearers was, Do you believe in Jesus Christ ? and every one who answered in the affirmative was from that instant held to be a Christian. We feel the weight of this objection, and we admit the principle of it. God forbid that we should divide Jesus Christ ! Yes, it is indeed Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ entire, who is the object of faith ; and we forget not that he has been made of God wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ; all of these jointly, and none of them severally. But all these together constitute grace ; and it is grace, entire grace, that we have made the object of faith. To have faith is to believe all those things of which the focus, the centre, and the source, is Jesus Christ crucified. The faith which would not believe in all these things, and would not receive them all as grace ; the faith which would divide or diminish Jesus Christ, would not be faith ; and from not embracing its whole object, we might in all truth say that it did not exist. We have sufficiently shown that whosoever would believe in the grace of pardon without believing in the grace of regeneration, would not really believe in pardon, which is illusory, without regeneration. Complete faith includes the conviction that He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, will with him freely give us all things ; in other words, will not repent of his first gift, nor withdraw it. Under the name of grace, therefore, it is Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ wholly, that we have set forth as the object of faith ; not merely his Godhead, but his humanity ; not merely his death, but his life ; not merely his doctrine, but his example ; not merely his sacrifice, but his glory ; for it is by all these things united, without excepting any or diminishing any, that Christ Jesus is our Saviour.

But because pardon stands at the head of this work, because this work in all its parts is only the development of pardon, because it is under the aspect and the name of pardon, that this work, which is one and indivisible, first presents itself to our view, because pardon is the sap which circulates in all the branches of this immense tree, the savor diffused throughout the minutest particles of this bread of life, we have said, and we say again, that pardon, taken with all its consequences, and all its developments, is the object of Christian faith. This is not to turn the eye away from Jesus Christ, who guarantees pardon, who himself bestows (Matt. ix. 6) and completes it.

I know not, brethren, if after all we have said there will still remain some scruple in those respectable adorers of Divine grace, who take alarm at the very idea of seeing any thing withheld from it. At all events, it would not be to St. Paul that they would object, but to us, as erroneously interpreting him. St. Paul, indeed, declares that we are saved by faith, or by means of faith. What more have we said? How could we even say more? Nothing can be more distinct, more precise; nothing less admits of being extended or restricted than the words, You are saved by faith. This is the clearest point in the Gospel. It may be examined more or less profoundly, but it cannot have more than one meaning. However we may understand it, faith is not the cause of salvation, and faith is the condition of it. In order to participate in the benefit of the pardon, in the fruits of the Saviour's sacrifice, it is necessary to believe; and faith is a moral fact which takes place in man. We have said all this, but we have said no more, and we do not see how our exposition can be repudiated without repudiating St. Paul. What if we had said, That which is wanting to faith, grace supplies? Well, St. Paul has said something very like this. "I fill up that which is behind of the afflic-

tions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake." Col. i. 24. Now then, in the same way, something is wanting to grace so long as we have not faith; in other words, God has not yet done all that he intends to do for us. Just as the afflictions of Christ continue in each of his members, who form only one body with him, the grace of God continues in each believer by the faith which is also grace. Christ is in each of his members who suffer; grace is in the soul of each sinner who believes. Why should faith, which is a work of man, not be at the same time a work of God? Why should not he who has granted pardon not also give faith? Should not all that leads to God come from God? Where is the difficulty of admitting this, and how do those zealots for grace not see that they would give him the glory more entirely by ceasing to regard faith as a merely human work, and by doing homage for it, as for every thing else, to the Divine liberality. Under this reservation, which secures the honor of grace, they may frankly admit the necessity of faith; they may, without fear, term it a condition of salvation, recognize it as a work, as a moral work; in one word, think on the subject of faith as it is impossible not to think.

No, brethren; there is not in this Divine system either difficulty or obscurity, snare or scandal. There is only solidity, harmony, and luminous perspicuity. But God forbid that it should be to us nothing more than a system, though a Divine system! God forbid that we should remain satisfied with admiration! Let us mutually warn each other of the danger of converting that which was given us for life into matter of mere speculation, and, so to speak, of pillaging the truth for the gratification of our curiosity. Let us admire, but let us bless; let us admire, but let us humble ourselves; let us admire, but let us ask, not so much for the knowledge as for the love which edifies. But let us



cease not to say to ourselves, and every where proclaim, that the Gospel is divinely rational, that it is wisdom among the perfect, that it is equally fitted to give to the simple wisdom, and to the wise simplicity.

## WRATH AND PRAYER.

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"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting [French, *contestations*, disputing]."—1 TIM. ii. 8.

PRAYER is represented in the Gospel as a holy and solemn act, which we cannot surround with too many safeguards, in order to prevent any thing of a profane and worldly nature from interfering with the reverential freedom of this converse between the creature and its Creator. If prayer is most frequently represented by the sacred writers as the means of the Christian life, their language at times almost seems to imply, that prayer is the end, and that it is necessary alternately to pray in order to live like Christians, and live like Christians in order to be able to pray. Prayer prepares for acts of self-denial, courage and charity, and these in their turn prepare for prayer. No one should be surprised at this double relation between prayer and life. Is it not natural that we should retire to be with God, that we may renew our sense of his presence, draw on the treasures of light and strength which he opens to every heart that implores him, and afterwards return to active life, better provided with love and wisdom? On the other hand is it not natural that we should

prepare by purity of conduct to lift up pure hands to God, and carefully keep aloof from every thing that might render this important and necessary act either difficult, or formidable, or useless? Still, brethren, though it is scarcely possible to have one of these convictions without having the other also, we may say that the former of these truths is less felt than the second; that to make prayer an end, and regulate our life by the thought of that solemn moment, supposes a progress in the paths of piety and a delicacy of Christian sentiment which can only be attained by degrees. However, when prayer has become a habit, and we set apart certain portions of the day when we are to be alone with God, the near prospect of a meeting which is always formidable even in its mildest form, is well fitted to keep vigilance awake, and suppress the movements of passion or concupiscence; and, provided this act of prayer has not degenerated into pharisaical observance, nothing, unquestionably, is more proper to exercise a mild discipline over our whole life in its minutest details. It is with this conviction, and probably from this experience, that the venerable Apostle St. Peter recommends parents to use meekness and indulgence in their domestic relations in order, he says, that their prayers be not hindered; and when St. Paul, in our text, exhorts men every where to lift up pure hands without wrath and disputation, his meaning certainly is not that wrath and disputation ought ever to mingle with the act of prayer, (that is self-evident,) but he means that a disposition which is too natural to all persons, and too habitual to some of them, and which opposition from without tends always to awaken in the calmest and most moderate minds, that this disposition to wrath and disputation ought to be watched over and repressed with the greatest care, in order that when the moment for prayer arrives, we may be able to lift up pure hands to heaven.

But, dear brethren, we cannot help seeing something more in the apostle's mind. The words introduced at the end of the verse so unexpectedly, and which we believe, for a moment, excite surprise in every reader; these words, "without wrath and doubting," contain a very marked and impressive allusion to the circumstances in which Christians were then placed. It would perhaps require us to be in a situation similar to theirs to feel all the force and beauty of the recommendation which the apostles are continually giving to their disciples to pray for all men, and especially for the powerful of the earth, in other words, their natural enemies. When St. Paul says to the Philippians, "Let your moderation be known unto all men," he gives a precept of charity which the malevolent, if it came to their knowledge, might mistake for a counsel of prudence. But if being made acquainted with the secret correspondence of the Apostles they find these words, "I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, and intercessions," (see how the Apostle repeats from the overflowings of charity,) "and giving of thanks be made for all men," (nothing is forgotten, God must be thanked for his favors to them as if they had been granted to ourselves,) for kings and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty;" if in addition to this motive so rational and pure they find this other motive so elevated and impressive, "for this is good and acceptable in the sight of our God and Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all:" if, then, men learn from these noble words that Christians behold in all men, even in their persecutors, only brethren, whom we must encourage on their way to heaven, and carry along with us by the effort and holy violence of our prayers even

to the footstool of our Father who is willing to be also treading, if they see that in the fearful struggle in which the disciples of the Redeemer are engaged with the world the highest rule of their conduct is charity, the deepest secret of their policy is intercession, O, brethren ! what will they say ? what can they say ? They may still accuse them of folly, but that is all ; and what an eulogium, or rather, what homage is such an accusation ! Now, beloved, this grand idea, intercession for enemies and persecutors, is that which occupies St. Paul in this passage, is that with which his mind is filled when he says to Timothy in our text, " I will, therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." We must now understand the meaning of the concluding words ; they are replete with prudence and delicacy. The Apostle has not said that these kings, these mighty, and in general, all these men not converted to Christianity, will be, and already are, the enemies and persecutors of Christianity. He has no wish to enlarge or envenom the sore ; he scarcely even alludes to it ; and instead of mentioning the causes of wrath and disputation which believers may meet with in the opposition of the world, it is merely of this wrath and disputation that he speaks ; these dispositions only he attends to and attacks. His chief business is not to judge those who give trouble to the souls of Christians ; it is this trouble that he condemns, be its cause or pretext what it may, and suppressing or neglecting superfluous explanations, he seems to say to his disciples, " All that you may experience on the part of man may produce in you, according as you have or have not the Spirit of God, two very different results : either irritate you and dispose you to disputation, or excite to prayer ; kindle in you the flame of hatred, or that of charity ; give food to the old man, or exercise to the new ; make you advance or fall back on the path on which God has made you enter. The

question is anew brought before you at every new attack of your enemies ; in other words, every new attack will necessarily tempt you to wrath and disputation as you are men, if it do not urge you to prayer as you are Christians. You cannot escape from wrath except by prayer, nor from hatred except by love ; and not to be a murderer, since hatred is murder, you must as much as in you lies give life to him to whom you wished to give death. At least it is necessary to ask it for him, it is necessary by your prayers to beget him to a new existence ; it is necessary in all cases, while praying for him, to exert yourselves in loving him. It is necessary that wrath and disputation be extinguished and die away in prayer."

Brethren, in applying to your varied circumstances the precept which Paul addressed to the first Christians in circumstances which ours do not in all instances resemble, I would now, agreeably to the words of the holy Apostle, insist on the obligation under which we all lie, whatever be our situation, whatever our relations in life, to substitute intercessory prayer for wrath and disputation. I will endeavor to prove that it is, as St. Paul expresses it, good and acceptable to God.

Two classes of men may excite in us wrath and disputation. The former are the enemies of our persons, those who from interest, envy, or revenge, are opposed to our happiness, and more generally all those who have done us wrong, or against whom we have ground of complaint. The latter are those who become our enemies from the opposition of their views and opinions to ours, or the opposition of their conduct to our wishes. Both are to us occasions of wrath and disputation. The Gospel requires that they be to us occasions of prayer.

In regard to the former, I mean our personal enemies, I might simply observe that God does not know them as our

enemies. God does not enter into our passions, or espouse our resentments. He sanctions and approves all the relations which he has himself created, those of parent and child, husband and wife, sovereign and subject. But the impious relation of enemy to enemy is entirely our work, or rather the work of the devil. God knows it only to denounce it. Besides, in his eye the whole body of mankind are only men, and some, in the relation which they stand to each other, only brethren. He has no ear, therefore, for our presumptuous distinctions when we say, or seem to say, *This is my friend, I will pray for him; that is my enemy, he shall have no part in my prayers.* In your enemies he sees only brethren, and therefore you ought not to see any thing else. Has he not said by the mouth of his Apostle, that supplications should be made for all men, and do you think he has excepted your enemies? Do you not think that if the Apostle had developed his thought, and enumerated all the classes of persons for whom you ought to pray, he would have given your enemies a first place in the enumeration? Has he not done so without saying it, when he exhorts the first Christians to intercede for the very persons from whom they had the greatest cause for fear and the strongest grounds of hatred? In fine, and this doubtless suffices, and is better than all arguments, has not Jesus Christ himself recommended you to pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, and has he not actually furnished you with the example? You wish, however, to draw a distinction, and remain in what you call the common path; but the extraordinary is the rule in the kingdom of God. You would wish to pray for your friends alone; but this very prayer is forbidden, and remains impossible, if you do not extend it to your enemies. And if you persist in excluding them from your prayers, be assured that God will not even accept those which you offer to him in behalf of the persons whom you love. Your supplications will

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be rejected ; the smoke of your offering will fall back upon your offering ; your desires will not reach that paternal heart which is ever open. What do I say ? With such feelings could you even pray ? Could a heart hardened and contracted by sin send forth those ardent sighs of which the poet speaks, sighs which

..... " *Sacrés pour Dieu lui-meme,  
Vont fléchir dans le ciel la charité supreme.*"

Ah ! love can only be understood by love ; there is no fellowship between love and hatred. Love ! love ! and you will be able to pray.

But this is not all, brethren. Not only ought we to pray for our enemies, *although* they be our enemies ; but we ought to pray for them *because* they are our enemies. As soon as they again become to us like the rest of mankind another distinction takes place, and a new right arises in their favor. They are confounded for a moment with all our other fellows, in order afterwards to stand forth from the general mass as privileged beings, with a special title to our prayers. An enemy ! In regard to the Christian, then, is an enemy nothing ? May he be confounded with the rest of the world ? And is nothing more due to him than to a stranger ? What is our enemy but a wretched man like ourselves, whose misery we know better than we know that of any other man ? Far from deluding ourselves with a favorable idea of his state, we probably exaggerate his danger. In our eye his faults are increased by all the evil which he has done us, and all which he wishes to do. And on this ground is not this man, whose misery and wants we know so well, one of the first whom we ought to recommend to the love of our heavenly Father ? The more he has hurt us, the more he must seem deserving of pity, and consequently the more interest he ought to excite in our heart, the more is he entitled



to a place in our prayers. Think well of this and you will see that it is not an ingenious idea, but the truth. You admit that the Christian may not hate ; how then can you refuse to admit that an enemy is only one whose misery is better known to him, and who thereby has a special claim on his assistance ?

When we meet with an opposition which frets and irritates us, Christian prudence counsels us to pray that the temptation may be removed ; and, in particular, that our self-love and injured feelings may not weaken our love for our neighbor. But this prudence, dear brethren, if it counsels nothing further, is not prudent enough. If the same feeling which disposes us to pray does not dispose us to pray for our enemies or opponents, it is difficult to believe that it is a movement of charity. Charity cannot be thus arrested. Its nature is to overcome evil with good, and this means not merely that it does not render evil for evil, but that in return for evil it renders good. It would not be charity if it did less. Its first step overleaps the imaginary limit which it does not even see or know. It does not restrict itself to not hating ; it loves. It would not do enough if it did not do more than enough. To pardon truly it is necessary to do more than pardon. Evil must be overcome by good ; and after the example of God himself, where the offence has abounded, grace must much more abound. Is not this to say, brethren, that pardoning, sparing, loving, all these duties are secured in the person offended only when he prays for the offender ? Can we admit that a soul is truly impelled by the love of Christ, and that it has pardoned in a spirit of true charity, while the noble desire which it feels does not seek to satisfy itself by the means most within its reach, the means which are surest and most perfect ? that while able to speak to God, it speaks not to Him of the enemy whom it pities and loves ? that this movement is not confounded, so to

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speak, with the first movement of charity, and that for fear of again falling into resentment and hatred, it does not hasten to give a sacredness to its enemy by recommending him to God, and thus attaching him to itself by a new and sublime relation? Can we renew our hatred for one for whom we have prayed? Does not every desire, every request which we send up to God for him endear him to us the more? Does not each prayer set him more beyond the reach of our passions? And if we did less, could we be sure that we would not again begin to hate? No, brethren; not till then is the work of mercy accomplished. We have no evidence of having pardoned an enemy until we have prayed for him.

After this, I ask, what could imprison or suppress in our heart that intercession, without which we are not sure of having pardoned our neighbor, or rather without which we are sure that we have not pardoned him? For to allege the gravity, the extent of the offence which we have received, has no plausibility. If we have brought ourselves to pardon him who has committed it, we might surely bring ourselves to pray for him; and if we cannot pray for him we have not pardoned him. An offence! But think well of it; can we really be offended? The term is too lofty, too grand for us. The offence may have grated very painfully on our feelings, or thwarted our interests, but it has gone no farther. Whatever injustice may have been done us, whatever cause we may have to complain, that is not the real evil. What evil absolutely is there in having our faith tried and our patience exercised? Because our fortune has been curtailed, our reputation compromised, our affections thwarted, does the world go on less regularly than it did? Not at all. The evil, the only real evil is the sin of that soul, the infraction of the eternal law, the violence offered to divine order; and if any other evil is to be added to this, it will be by our murmur-

ings, since the effect of them will be to make two sinners in place of one. Do you then seek a reason for refusing your intercession, and consequently your pardon to your adversaries? I have found one, and it is a fit ground for resentment: God your Father was insulted in the insult which you experienced. But show me, pray, the extraordinary man who, quite ready to pardon on his own account, cannot resolve to pardon on God's account! Ah! this man never has been met with, and never shall! For, if he is in a state to pray for an enemy, he knows God; and if he knows God, he knows that vengeance belongeth unto him, and that men are not permitted to be angry on his account, any more than their own. If we know God we also know ourselves, and we are too deeply penetrated with the feeling of our own unworthiness, we have too recent a remembrance of having been the enemies of God, to feel in regard to other enemies, or other rebellious children of God, any other sentiment than that of pity. It may belong to God to be angry with them; us it becomes only to pity them, and pity them the more, the more grievously God has been offended. This God, moreover, who has exhorted and taught us to pardon, is undoubtedly a God who pardons. Punishment is his strange work. His anger, all divine, takes nothing from his love. Were he man, he would pray for these enemies of his will. Jesus Christ, his Son, whom zeal for his Father's honor devoured, prayed for the enemies of his Father. So far, therefore, is God from forbidding our intercession, that he himself by his Spirit forms within us in behalf of his enemies, groanings which cannot be uttered. Thus, brethren, if in a certain sense we say with David, "Do I not hate them that hate thee?" (Ps. cxxxix. 21) like David also we pray for them. Ps. ix. 4. Ah! so far will the view of God as offended at our offence be from stifling in our heart a rising prayer, that, on the contrary, this holy sorrow will draw us away from

our selfish and carnal sorrow. I mean, brethren, that the more our personal resentment is effaced in the sadness of seeing our Father offended, the weak scandalized, the seeds of sin multiplied, the empire of darkness extended, the more will our heart be free to pardon, to love, and to pray. When the first cry of nature within us shall have been suppressed by the sighing of that grief which made the prophet exclaim, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law;" "My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words," (Ps. cxix. 136, 139,) then shall we be so much the more sensible of the misery of that enemy whom God has taught us to love, and whom he himself loves; then our first desire after having cried unto God, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory," (Ps. cxv. 1,) will be to exclaim, after the example of St. Stephen, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" (Acts vii. 60,) and after the example of the divine Redeemer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Luke xxiii. 34.

But alas! (and here, brethren, give us all your attention,) instead of seeing in the injury which we have received only an injury done to God, we insolently appropriate to ourselves the offence of which he alone is the object. In what hurts him we feel ourselves offended, and consequently become angry, instead of being grieved. It will be well, if instead of praying, we have not cursed! Yes! this religion, to which God has condescended to attach us, we regard as our own property, as the subject of our self-love, our earthly heritage; it is an opinion which we have espoused, a position which we have taken up. We ought to belong to it, not it to us; and when we see it insulted or menaced, it is not so much our piety that grieves, as it is our self-love that storms and rages. The very certainty of our faith only serves to put our passions more at ease. We feel happy in giving full

scope to our hatred or our pride under the cover of our zeal. We even go the length of rejoicing in injustice, not that we have been counted worthy to suffer for the cause of God, but because it is injustice, and injustice from which we are exempt. An injustice, good God ! Injustice to us ! What shall we think of it if we one day see it as it is, or as it was ? What will we think of all those precipitate and rash judgments, of that eagerness to believe evil, those refusals of all explanation, those anathemas ill disguised under expressions of pity, that criminal industry which we have exerted in fanning the flame which, though we might not be able to extinguish, we might certainly abstain from fanning ? What will we think of all this when our eyes will be opened ? And which of the two positions will appear worse, that of the unhappy beings who attacked the truth, or that of the men who defended it with poisoned weapons ? Ah ! if the attacks of the enemies of religion is not a signal for our charity as well as a call upon our zeal, if we do not then feel the love of Christ constraining us, if our compassion is not doubled for the unhappy adversaries of the truth, if we do not feel a sincere desire to view their conduct in the least unfavorable light, and excuse them to ourselves ; if these men, of whom, perhaps, till then we have made no mention in our prayers, do not from that moment become the special and privileged object of them, it is certainly high time to look within, and ask whether till now we have truly believed, and whether, under the name of religion, we have ought else than a system or an opinion.

Enough has been said, brethren, to establish the duty which we have in view. But to the consideration of the duty is added that of a near and important interest. Even when we do not hate, the idea of an enemy fills us with bitterness ; and whether or not he inspires us with fear, there is something repulsive both in the memory of his past offences and in the idea of those which he may be preparing to commit,

We stand so much in need of love and esteem, that the thought of a single being withholding it from us is felt by the soul to be a gnawing worm, resembling remorse. But when we have prayed for him we no longer regard him as the same man; he is no longer our enemy, he is our *protégé*; and as it is natural to feel attached to the good we do, we henceforth feel pleasure in thinking of him; we feel pleased in following up our first favor, and consolidating it by new prayers. This idea elevates without producing pride. It gives us strength to bear the new attacks of his hatred without murmuring and resentment. If we are forced to have relations with him, it instils a meekness into our proceedings, of which he will, perhaps, ultimately become sensible. It disposes us to recognize any faults we may have committed, to confess them candidly, and repair them; and though such a conduct should not mitigate his enmity, how much will it not contribute to set our soul at rest?

Contrast the ordinary fruits of wrath and debate with these results of prayer. In yielding to the former, not only do you place yourself in opposition to the holy law of God, but you destroy the peace of your life and the peace of your soul; you aggravate the evils of a situation already deplorable; you kindle up hatred in the heart of your enemy; you render reconciliation on his part, as well as on yours, always more difficult; you run from sin to sin in order to lull your pride, and this pride gives you only a bitter, poisoned, and criminal enjoyment. How much better, then, is prayer than wrath and strife!

But personal enemies are not the only ones who are to us the occasion of wrath and strife. The class of enemies, as we have already said, includes all those whose opinions, views, and conduct are in opposition to our interests or our principles. How little does the impatience which they

excite differ from hatred ! That produced by our personal enemies is often less vivid. Look to the mutual exasperation of parties and sects. Look to those wars of opinion, the most cruel of all, and which death alone terminates. Certainly, if this is not hatred, if these are not enemies, there is neither hatred nor enmity in the world.

With regard to such enemies, our usual method is to hate in silence if we feel ourselves weak, or to dispute obstinately if we believe ourselves strong. The Gospel proposes another method. It approves neither of hatred nor strife. Not that it authorizes a careless indifference ; not that indignation may not become the Christian as it became our Lord himself, when the fearful epithets of *fools* and *hypocrites* escaped from his lips ; not that it is not proper to stand boldly up in defence of truth and righteousness, and become spiritually the foe of their foes. To act otherwise were to disavow our fathers, condemn the apostles, and deny Christ. But the wrath of man and the spirit of strife, which pride enkindles, have nothing in common with those noble combats. Zeal, courage, perseverance, indignation itself, must all be pervaded with charity, or rather, proceed from charity. Indignation and prayer must spring from a common source ; the former from love to God, the latter from love to men, and consequently both from love.

How widely different is this conduct from that which is commonly pursued in the world ! Let Government commit an error, it is greedily laid hold of and bitterly commented on ; and this is all that is done. Let a religious teacher profess a system which is judged dangerous ; his minutest expressions are laid hold of, and isolated so as to distort their meaning ; his life is boldly explained by his opinions, or his opinions by his life, and there the matter rests. Let an individual, who by his position and mode of thinking has fixed attention, hazard an imprudent step, but perhaps imprudent

from excess of candor, the alarm is sounded, the public is deafened with insulting clamor, the whole passions are aroused against an insignificant fact, often against a word; the microscope of hatred is placed before the eye, and kept there. In this burst of indignation he is considered moderate and clement who substitutes for wrath cool and insulting derision. Let one of our kindred, or only one of our acquaintance, setting too little value on our counsel or our example, proceed in the education of his children, or the conduct of his affairs, or the habits of his life, on another system than that of which we had shown him the advantages; let him presume to think, speak, and act differently from us; this is often quite enough to make him more odious to us than the man by whom we have been directly and voluntarily offended; a humiliating weakness more common than is believed, a hidden and profound source of the most bitter hatred! This deadly poison is fostered in silence and intoxicates in secret; the error makes us unhappy, but not from compassionating it. It is hated not as an error, but as an opinion opposed to our own. Were it truth, it would be hated all the same, and for the same reason. This is all that we feel, and all that we bethink ourselves of doing in behalf of this brother, though we think that he is much to be pitied. His condition made an appeal to our charity, and the appeal has been answered by our self-love. Thus in the errors of our brethren, which are, however, misfortunes, every thing supplies food to the spirit of wrath and the desire of strife. To pray, brethren, to entreat the Lord to shed his enlightening Spirit on this government, on that teacher, on that individual; to wrestle for them in presence of the Divine mercy, ah! this is what is seldom thought of. And how should we do this if we do not love? How should we do it if we rejoice in unrighteousness rather than in truth; if that abuse, that vice, that error, with which we seem angry, is in reality only a mine which we take pleasure in exploding; if so far from hastening to apply a



remedy, we would rather prolong the disease as a perennial source of complaint and declamation ?

Where are those friends of Divine truth on whom every irregularity in regard to the law of God inflicts suffering ? Where are those charitable hearts whom the sins of their brethren seriously afflict, and who, with the same sincerity and the same solicitude with which they would pray for themselves, present the miseries and wants of their enemies at their heavenly Father's footstool ? There are such persons undoubtedly, thank God ; there are persons who silently and modestly perform this office of charity every day. Unknown benefactors of the world are those who obtain from the goodness of God that immortal balm which calms resentment, mitigates hatred, extinguishes wrath. To them, without knowing it, society owes the reparation of injustice, the correction of error, the triumph of truth. It is they whose hands, stretched towards heaven, procure protection to a world which perhaps misrepresents them, or at most knows them not. It is by them that the kingdom of God, trammelled by so many obstacles, gradually makes way upon the earth which it will one day completely overrun. To this obscure power, to this unknown influence, are due the numerous blessings of which a restless and turbulent activity appropriates all the glory. One man, usefully pursuing a course at first beset with thorns, another from whom painful trials have suddenly been removed far away ; a third, who, apparently shunned by truth and peace, has at last found them, owe it all to the obscure intervention of a man whom they never saw, or whom they pass without noticing or suspecting that by him they are noticed ; of a man in such mean circumstances that it seems impossible they can ever owe him any thing. Such is the efficacy of prayer, and if the number of these benevolent petitioners were increased, what evils would be removed from the earth, what errors eradicated, *what abuses* spontaneously reformed !

Brethren, you will bear me witness that I have not said too much. Either prayer is nothing or it is, without exception all that I have said. And if, casting your eyes over the world, and appealing to experience, you ask, Where, then, is this power? where are all these effects? we answer by asking, Where are those who pray? I see in the world abundance of people who dispute, and murmur, and accuse; but where are those who pray? And, not to look further, where in this audience are those who pray habitually for their enemies? Where are those, I do not say who prescribe to themselves a rule in words, and add to their acts of devotion a petition of forgiveness to their enemies, but who, moved with tender compassion, tremble for the fate of their erring brethren, and affectionately recommend them to the goodness of the Father of lights? Where are those whom a benevolent solicitude prostrates at the feet of the King of the universe, entreating him to save those also who know him not? O, Spirit of prayer and love, where are you? where shall we find you? where recognize you? Do we know those who pray for their enemies? Alas! we know those who do not pray. How, in fact, can the same spring send forth sweet water and bitter? How can we believe that those who curse before men can bless before God? Can those whose mouth is ever open to the expressions of wrath find in the secret of the closet meek words in which to recommend to God those whom out of the closet they count it a pleasure to condemn?

Ah! brethren, the divine Intercessor must have fully established his abode in the soul before the spirit of intercession can dwell there! Each of us flatters himself with feeling the force of all that is touching in the ministry of Jesus Christ, who before his appearance in the flesh, who in Gethsemane, upon the cross, and in heaven, interceded and continually intercedes for the humanity which he has redeemed. Yes, each of us flatters himself with feeling it! But be not de-

ceived. Jesus Christ, and with him generous compassion, indefatigable love, universal charity, are, to use St. Paul's expression, *formed* within us only gradually and laboriously. Jesus Christ, the Saviour, enters all at once into the soul, and completely fills it; but Jesus Christ, who is love, the genuine new man, grows up there slowly and painfully. We may, indeed, imagine that we love as we believe, because, in fact, we begin to love in beginning to believe; and so long as our love is not subjected to difficult trials, we judge it as great as our faith. But how soon will we be undeceived if we are sincere, and willing to know ourselves! How difficult is it for the old leaven to lose its sourness! What seeds of hatred, what homicidal germs are in the heart which has received Jesus Christ! How much of Cain still remains in this pretended Abel! And what avails it to believe much if we love little, or to believe if we do not love? And truly, what have we believed, in whom have we believed, if we do not love? In Jesus Christ, you say. In what Jesus Christ? Not certainly in him of Bethlehem, or Bethany, or Sychar, or Gethsemane, or Calvary! It is in an imaginary Jesus Christ, who has nothing of the reality but the name; a Jesus Christ who has neither loved, nor prayed, nor died; a name, not a being; a phantom, not a man and a God. In our eagerness to be saved we have only embraced a shadow. O God, bestow upon us a real and living Christ! He alone saves, since he alone is loved and teaches to love. O God, unite more and more closely, not our spirit to a name, but our soul to a soul; to the soul of Jesus Christ, thy Son, and the Son of man, our God and our Brother! In this intimate and living union may this soul gradually become our soul, and may we learn of him, by virtue of living with him, to love as he loved, bless as he blessed, and pray as he prayed! Amen.

## TWO COUNSELS OF WISDOM.

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TWO DISCOURSES ON LUKE, XII. 35.

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### FIRST DISCOURSE.

#### COUNSEL TO THOSE WHO ARE SETTING OUT.

"Let your loins be girt about, and your lamps burning."—LUKE XII. 35.

THE words of our Lord, taken in their first obvious meaning, bring before us men who may at any moment receive notice to depart, and men whom the darkness may at any moment overtake. To the former it is said, Get up, and gather under your girdle the long folds of your flowing robes, in order that when the moment of departure comes nothing may render it too difficult, nothing may embarrass or retard your step. To the latter it is said, Instantly, against the hour when day will close, kindle a lamp whose flame will disperse or cheer the gloomy darkness of the night.

Taken in their spiritual sense, these words are addressed to all men, and imply, Take the necessary measures, that when the moment comes nothing may hinder you from com-

mencing your journey, or at least from setting out resolutely and willingly in whatever path God may choose you to go, and provide yourselves beforehand with a consolation which may refresh you in all your afflictions. For the darkness spoken of in the text is not that of ignorance, error or doubt, but that of anguish and tribulation, and Jesus Christ here opposes the lamp of joy to the night of woe.

This exhortation was peculiarly appropriate to the first disciples, and especially to the Apostles. For whom was it more requisite than for them to have their loins girt and their lamps burning? They were called by Providence to lay the foundations of the Christian Church amid the keenest opposition, and in face of the most formidable obstacles. They were sent unarmed on the conquest of the world. They were going, according to the expression of Jesus Christ himself, like sheep in the midst of wolves. To them the future was dark, and the only thing which they clearly discerned across the darkness was crosses planted from station to station: "You shall have tribulation;" such was the first promise which their Master had given them. The least of these tribulations was, like Abraham, to leave their country and their kindred; a greater was to remain in the bosom of a country and a family which hated them necessarily because they loved Jesus Christ. Be this as it may, they were placed under orders, and at the disposal of their Master. They knew that the servant is not greater than his Lord, that the world would do to them what it had done to Jesus Christ, that the Shepherd being smitten the sheep would be scattered: and Peter had from the lips of Jesus heard this declaration, applicable to all his colleagues, "Another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." What would have become of the first Christians, where would the Christian Church now be, had Peter and his companions not attended in earnest to the

exhortation of our Lord: "Let your loins be girt about, and your lamps burning."

But if the servant is not greater than his master, neither is one servant greater than another servant. All have, in general, the same vocation. Circumstances may differ; the obligation is the same for all. I go further. There is no man, whether Christian or not, who has not some grounds to address himself in these terms: "Let your loins be girt about and your lamps burning." I address them to you all, dear hearers, and, combining the features of the natural with those of the Christian life, say to you after the Sovereign Teacher, and on his part, "Let your loins be girt about, and your lamps burning."

"Let your loins be girt about;" in other words, be ready to set out. Now, the spirit of Christianity, which expresses the true destiny of man, and the true relations of man with God, consists, in this respect, in granting nothing to necessity, but every thing to the order of God; so that each of our involuntary privations is transformed into a voluntary sacrifice, and we at last find we have given what apparently we had lost; given, I say, freely, and from a principle of faith, obedience and love. To have this disposition, is what the Gospel calls being ready to set out. There are other ways of being so, but none having the character of liberty and religion of which we have just spoken, we do not say of any of them that it realizes the idea of our Saviour's expression, "Let your loins be girt about." Neither thoughtless giddiness, nor insensibility, nor pride, can be, in the sense of Christianity or of absolute truth, the girdle of our loins.

"Let your loins be girt about." For you are called to set out, even precipitately, and for the most part to go where you would not. Some are required suddenly to quit the place of their birth and their kindred. Who, in fact, can promise himself to die where he was born? How many

have terminated under a foreign sky and in a strange land? Life begun in the country of their fathers, and amid all the objects of their affection? Necessity, duty, honor, command these separations. The pain which they give to tender hearts is admirably expressed by Jeremiah in the following lament: "Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native land." What do I say? Were this separation voluntary, and the accomplishment of it our most eager desire, the moment which consummates it never passes without a struggle or regret, and many a one feels astonished when the hour is come, at having ever been able to wish for it. He who *goes away*, be assured, seldom goes joyful; he requires to dream of return. If we are not quitting our country, at least we are leaving our family, we are going to live under another roof, and in other relations, often less free and less pleasant. However short way we go, we suffer a kind of exile; for the paternal hearth is also a country; to many the true, the only native country. Such is the law of nature and the will of God himself: "A man shall leave his father and his mother." And what shall I say of those who are left? They do not depart, you say? No; they remain, but alone. This also is one mode of departing. They too are exiled, exiled in their solitude. The place where they remain is no longer the same. For what is a place? It is nothing. What is it that attaches us to it but just those whom we have seen and possessed there? Loved objects are the light and beauty of the place which we inhabit. In their absence it is no longer the same, so that without stirring we have changed our place; without making one step, we remove from them we love. We too, then, fathers, mothers, brothers, friends who remain, when our children, or our sisters, or our friends are no more; we, too, have set out, and may apply to ourselves these words of Jesus Christ: "Let your loins be girt about."

But setting out is not only a change of place, it is a change of position. It is to quit the known for the unknown, to exchange relations for other relations ; from the present which flies away to pass into the future. To understand it thus, life is full of these departures, the whole of life is only a departure. The fashion of this world passeth away. Many of these departures or changes may appear advantageous. The poor man who becomes rich thinks he has made a good change, having substituted fertile plains for barren moors. This may be a great mistake. Nothing is happy or unhappy in itself ; the heart gives every thing its value and significance ; and sinners as we are, prosperity sits ill upon us, security is the greatest of our dangers. But let us pass over this, and admit that there are changes or departures which, in themselves, may be looked on as happy. Let us speak only of those which are galling to the flesh, and say, while continuing to compare a situation to a place, a change of whatever kind to a departure, that the loss of fortune is one of the most painful departures, and that nothing more resembles poverty than exile ; for poverty isolates. In fact, no crowd gathers around him who has nothing to give, and it is much for him if his indigence does not convert the world into a desert. Now who can flatter himself with always enjoying the fortune which he has inherited from his fathers, or amassed by his industry ? And (let this be well considered,) poverty is tolerable to a certain point to those who have never been rich, obscurity to those who have never been conspicuous. With difficulty, however, do we resolve to be nothing when we have been something ; and how much is poverty, which all the world hates, detested by those who have not been always poor ! How insupportable do they feel it to be, and how difficult is it, at least without having become really new men, to rise, if I may so express it, to the full height of such a situation ! It was, then, in view



of such a departure also, that Christ Jesus may have said, "Let your loins be girt about."

There is, however, a more painful one. The death of our kindred and our friends is more difficult to bear. Kindred and friends are the riches of our heart, riches in poverty making the most intelligent objects of envy to the richest, from whom this wealth is so often withheld or withdrawn. Well! our inferior riches are more faithful to us than the other. More than one man has preserved his fortune, and even seen it continue increasing till the day of his death. No one has so preserved all those whom he loved. A man or a woman who reaches twenty without having worn mourning is a miracle. The thing is never seen. It is a rare happiness to possess till forty, I do not say both father and mother, but one of them. And what shall I say of the many sudden blows which death strikes without respect for what we call the order of nature, and without other care than to find in one's soul the place that is most sensitive, and will yield the keenest pang? If there is in society or in the church a public-spirited man, apparently necessary, one would say that our esteem and our gratitude point him out, recommend him to the stroke of death. Through a crowd of what seem to us insignificant beings, whom he spares from disdain, he proceeds direct to this man and lays him in the dust. I know very well that in all this death obeys God, and does not strike at hazard; but that its blows are unexpected, that the thought of Him who sends it and directs it is, in this respect as in every other, beyond all our calculations and foresight, is too evident. Life is a field of battle, where death passes over the front ranks to reach the last, spares the common soldier to throw down the captain, and where, from caprice or indifference, he favors the coward above the brave, the recruit more than the veteran. This appearance of hazard, this variety of chances, this powerlessness of all

guarantees, this sword suspended over all heads, has something very alarming ; and, did not our desires make us forget our fears, what life should we, fathers, husbands, wives, children, what lives should we lead while thinking that no one instant can answer for the next, and that the morrow of the day which has seen us at the head or in the bosom of a prosperous and flourishing family may see us orphans, widows, without posterity, without any worldly respect, without any object of life ? Now, in all these lead, we ourselves die. A part of our life, and of our heart, is buried in each of these tombs ; or, if you will, each of those deaths transports us from a sweet and flowery district into a more inclement region. Life is a voyage from the south towards the north, from summer into winter, and the decline of life finds us placed upon a bare and ungrateful soil which scarcely gives the means of life to our poor heart, and whose only ornament is the tender and sad remembrance of a happier home. Gradually, or rather stroke after stroke, our life is despoiled. We ought to foresee this, but we do not. Each loss is more grievous, each sacrifice more difficult to make, and the obedience we yield to God becomes more imperfect, less loyal. With how much reason, then, might the Divine Teacher say in my text, "Let your sins be girt about."

One thing at least we might know, that in our turn it would be necessary to die, and that to young and old death seems always premature. What more serious than the certainty of dying, and the uncertainty of the last moment ! What better fitted continually to fix our whole attention ! And it is true, that at these moments when the thought comes upon us our very bones tremble. For of all events death is the greatest, of all separations it is the most absolute, of all losses it is the most painful, since it includes all others ; of all departures, in fine, it is the most formidable, since, apart

from the light of Christian reflection, it is a departure towards a country of darkness and terror. But these moments of reflection and alarm are rare. The usual course is not to think that we shall die. We know it, however, and we every day see it light on some one near us. We know that we must die, but we feel that we are alive. We have the habit of life, but we have not that of death. Life, with its bustle, its various impressions, its joys, its pains, ever fills our whole soul. By dint of forgetting death we cease to believe it, and when it at length arrives its presence astonishes us like the arrival of the least expected as well as least wished for guest. But be this as it may, it must be received. We must, I do not say abandon life to death, which claims it, but restore it faithfully to God, who asks it back. It is necessary to die, and die well. Is this an easy matter? Is it not, on the contrary, the most difficult in the world? Do not those who have found strength to yield to necessity or to God their goods, their health, their country, nay, the life of their friends, do not they usually find that to yield their own life, however despoiled, poor, unenviable it may appear, is a very different thing? Do the old die more willingly than the young, the unhappy more willingly than the happy? Is not life dear in itself, independently of every thing else? Does not every condition, every fortune, seem preferable to death? And when the better part of us has gone before us to the tomb, do we not eagerly cling to a miserable fragment, even while conscious how little it deserves it?

But after all, brethren, the different departures of which we have spoken, and even this last departure, which is called death, are only the consequences (when they are voluntary,) or the images (when the will does not interfere,) of another departure, or another death; with reference to which, above all, Jesus Christ has said, "Let your loins be girt about."

Let us not distinguish, brethren, when the distinctions are useless. In all the departures, in all the separations which we have enumerated, the thing always implied is separation from one's self. It is from ourselves that we are separated in exile, in the loss of goods, and the death of friends; for all that we love becomes a part of ourselves; much more is it from ourselves that we are separated in death, since none of the blessings of life are so near to us, or can be so dear, as life itself. What! to be torn from one's self, divided in one's self? Will our nature and our will, to which this division is so very repugnant, be completely disposed to it after we have employed all our time in rendering it difficult, odious, and impossible? For be not deceived. So long as we do nothing to facilitate the departure we increase the difficulty; the knot which we have been unwilling to loose always becomes the harder. Between dominion and bondage there is no alternative. The world and the flesh take possession of a heart in which the Spirit is not established and fortified. How do you expect, after having passed a whole life in forging your chains, that when the hour of trial comes, you will at once get rid of them? As well might we say that a man, in passing from an inferior office for which a slight degree of knowledge suffices, to an eminent charge requiring the most extensive requirements, will find himself fully provided by the mere effect of this sudden and unexpected promotion, and that science will spring up in him when wanted, like the hair upon his head. When did the art of arts, the great art of living, become the only one that can be known without learning it? You who shrug up your shoulders when you are told of prodigies, can you suppose a greater one, one more inconceivable? You whom we see always ready to oppose the invisible laws of nature to the announcement or the mere idea of a miracle, what, pray, do you make of nature and her laws? Rome, you often repeat, was not built in a day.

Every great result strikes its roots deep into the past; and yet you will have it that conversion, the new birth (for nothing less is in question.) is the work of an instant. Ah! Rome would be far more easily built in a day than a man converted in a day. This marvel is possible to God, but we may safely say it is a thousand, ten thousand to one, that he will not do it. By what incomprehensible fascination, by what strange enchantment have you come to believe in the existence of knowledge without previous study, a masterpiece of art without previous practice, and, to say all in one word, effects without causes? Think the matter over with yourselves, and admit that the means must correspond to the object, the beginning to the end; and that to be in a condition to separate freely from one's self, in the different cases in which separation is enjoined us, we must have spent our life in separating ourselves, I mean, before any external circumstances has made it necessary for us to do so. In two words, which you will doubtless comprehend, to be able to separate from ourselves, we must be separated beforehand. We must have outstripped the event; the signal for departure must have found us already departed.

Does not this, which I say in general of all departures, apply in a striking manner to the departure which is called death? Of it, at least, you would not venture to say that it requires no preparation.

Death being to all the most fearful of departures, and to each the strangest and most novel event, we must especially have death in view in repeating those words of the Master, "Let your loins be girt about."

Jesus Christ is not the only person, nor the first, who has said so. The sages of the world have also had the same thought. Of the science of life and that of death, they have only one single science. They have taught that life is an apprenticeship of death. It is true that life

by itself, all the partial deaths of which it is composed, (for each separation is a death,) seems arranged so as to train us to die. But universal experience proves that this is not enough. It is necessary to add our will. It is necessary to train ourselves to die. Now, this is not a trivial science; it is the greatest of all; and I do not comprehend how he who has not by long practice learned to die should learn it suddenly, all at once, at the moment when it becomes absolutely necessary to know it. All men are not allowed to die with the insensibility of the brute. Even those who have lived like beasts do not die like beasts. Nature assists some in doing so, but not all. Who would envy those who do? Does the whole then consist in resolving from any motion whatever to perform this sad step with a good grace? He who dies thus knows not what it is to die. That is all. To know what it is to die, and be willing for it, is the point. It is not to be merely dragged along, but to follow; not merely to yield, but to obey. Now, this surpasses the power of nature or temperament; and here, therefore, I say once more, is a departure which we know not without having learned, which we learn with great difficulty and slowly, and which must be constantly in our mind in order not to be constantly forgotten. To whom, then, in regard to this great voyage of death, may we not apply our Saviour's words, "Let your loins be girt about?"

The just and clear image which our divine Master employs may be stated in a single word: Be detached. What hinders us from departing, or departing willingly, or walking with a firm and rapid step when the signal is given, is the attachments which, like the foldings and refoldings of a flowing robe, embarrass and retard us. I say our attachments, and I might add, our cares; but we are anxious only in proportion as we are attached. What inspires no interest cannot be the object of any care, so that in *attachments* every thing is included.

To obey the signal of departure in spirit and in truth, it is necessary, then, at the outset to be detached.

This, brethren, will be conceded subject to a distinction. Some would distinguish between the attachments whose objects are things, and those whose objects are persons. The former are given up, at least in theory, the latter are reserved; not, perhaps, from thinking that the latter are essential to dispute the call of God, but perhaps from its being supposed that between these attachments and this call there can be no conflict, that they are always in accordance, and that, therefore, there is no use in anticipating a case which will never occur. The supreme sage, Jesus Christ, has judged otherwise. In the parable of the feast, when we hear one of the persons invited replying to the invitation, I have purchased a field, I pray thee have me excused; another, I have bought a pair of oxen, and must go to prove them, I pray thee have me excused; a third, who has just married, thinks he has no need of excuse, and simply answers, I have married a wife, and cannot come. We have here, in few words, an excellent description of the insolence of our idolatries. But are we not at the same time taught that conflict between our natural affections and the call of God is a possible event? There is a man who refuses—what? To go to God. Why? Because he has married. This surprises you, and you doubt if the parable says so. It does say so, brethren; it shows us a man who will not obey the call of God because he is married. To a second call he will answer, I have a son, and so cannot go; to a third, I have a country, and so cannot go. This is always without one word of excuse, without the shadow of a scruple. He thinks it so great a matter to love something or some one, he thinks there is such prodigious merit in these attachments, of which some are perhaps common to man with the beasts, that he does not suppose that there can be any thing beyond or above them.

In other words, because he has a family there is no heaven, because he has a wife and children there is no God.

I grant, brethren, that few persons, since there has been a Gospel in the world, dare to speak thus. What we require to remove is not an argument which can scarcely be used, but a fact which is unfortunately too common. One who would blush at the idea of preferring perishable riches to the Author of every good and perfect gift, quietly rears the altar of his natural affections above the altar of the living God. It does not follow that these affections gain any thing thereby. On the contrary, they lose much; and I wish much time would allow me to show you that every attachment which does not become, according to the expression of St. Paul, a love in the Spirit, generates and falls into the class of instincts which man shares with the lower animals. No; the man of whom I am speaking does not love his children and his wife more from loving them exclusively, but he loves Him less who ought to be loved above all. He is less faithful in obeying him, less prompt in answering his call. He has stolen himself from God and from duty, in order to give himself to the world. For those affections which the Spirit of God has not sanctified, that love which has not become *charity*, is, be assured, the world; or, if a stronger love, is nature. It is in effect beautiful as the verdure of the earth and the azure of the heavens, but God will destroy both the earth and the heavens.

It is not because we love, but because we love in a worldly carnal manner, because in this love we secretly seek the satisfaction of our selfish nature rather than the good of those we love. We say to God, We have attachments, and therefore I cannot come. Here, no doubt, is a duty to perform, a testimony to give, a sacrifice to offer, but it is not compatible with our love; and, at all events, the heart is elsewhere. We have not two religions, and the religion



which we have is entirely in these natural attachments ; we have not two Gods, and our god is this creation that God has given us. Given, did we say ? God gives nothing absolutely but himself ; all the rest he lends or trusts. Nothing is given to you but God ; you yourselves belong only to God, and yet, most cruel of follies ! you are not willing either to belong to him or have him belong to you.

After this, brethren, I have nothing to say of grosser attachments. If those of which I have spoken carry us away from God, hinder us from following his call, what will the case be with avarice, ambition, and voluptuousness ? Let us not honor impossible errors by repeating them. Let us, however, make an observation on a species of attachment so much the more dangerous that we do not suspect it. Brethren, I mean *habits*.

If the term *attachment* seems too good to be applied to habits, let us, if you please, call them *ties*. Habits, in fact, are ties, chains. We contract them unawares, often without feeling any pleasure in them ; but we cannot break them without pain. It costs us something to cease to be what we have always been, to cease doing what we have always done. Life itself, in its least attractive form, the life least deserving of the name, is dear to us from the mere habit of living ; and we are seen carefully hanging upon the walls of our dwellings frames without a picture in them. The most intimate attachments, and still more, the most incontestable duties, have often given way before the power of habit. To have the loins girt about, then, is not merely to distrust our attachments ; it is to prevent our habits from striking their roots too deep within. For at the moment of any of those departures of which we have spoken, one of these habits would suffice to keep us, as it were, chained to the place which God desires us to quit. Nothing, therefore, which is habitual should you regard as indifferent or trivial. The most in-

visible ties are not the weakest, and at all events their number renders them indestructible. We must remember that a cable is composed of threads. It is impossible to dispense with habits; a life without habits is a life without a rule. But in regard to these, as in regard to every thing else, it is necessary to say with the Apostle, "All things are lawful unto me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." We ought every moment to be at the disposal of the Lord, and guard against fixing our place here as if we were to be here for ever. Bear in mind that we are really and of necessity strangers and pilgrims. And yet let us not do any thing slightly or negligently. Let us labor as diligently as if we and our labors were to endure always. Though we endure not, let us do enduring works. Let us employ all our faculties in every thing we have to do; let us employ to the best advantage our leisure, our resources, the life which God gives us; let us not live by halves, live with regret, but let us be always impressed with the conditions of our existence. While staying, let us be ready to depart; let us be continually departing in spirit; "let us have our loins girt about."

If he who has received the Gospel thinks that this injunction does not apply to him, seeing, as he imagines, that in receiving the Gospel he bade adieu to the world, he is mistaken. In one sense the separation of which we speak takes place once for all, and is not renewed; in another sense it takes place at different periods of life, and with more or less frequency. Without the first separation the others are impossible, but on the other hand this first separation is never so perfect and absolute that we may after its date cease to concern ourselves about others; or, in other terms, say to ourselves, My heart being previously won, works will follow of themselves. No, no; the first impulse must be kept up, the first separation be always anew confirmed.

We must, in separating ourselves, incessantly employ the same principles, the same convictions which produced our first separation.

And yet, brethren, the wisdom which we preach would be sad folly if we were obliged to stop here. We preach detachment, but man lives on attachment. He must love some thing or other. As soon as he has ceased to love he is dead. It would be as easy to remain for ever suspended in the air or to breathe in vacuo, as live without attachment. Should you bring yourself to love nothing, would you be better? Assuredly you would be worse, and God would have ill served the interest of his glory in making you, if I may thus express myself, dead before your death. To detach one's self is nothing if an attachment is not at the same instant formed. Attachment is even the first duty; detachment comes after. The cell in which the butterfly is imprisoned does not burst and crumble away until the wings formed on the insect expand and open its dark dwelling. We begin to detach ourselves from the world only when we have learned to know something better. Till then, we are only capable of that disgust and ennui which do not constitute detachment. Hence, when we preached to you detachment, when we said to you, "Let your loins be girt about," we in other words said to you, "Set your affections on things above." And what are those things, brethren? Are they things merely? Do they not also include at the outset a person, and one most worthy of your love? "Set your affections," says the Apostle, "on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Why are these things which are on high lovely but just because there sits Jesus Christ who loved us, and God who gave him to us? Our religion is not merely a religion of detachment, for then it would not be a religion; it is a religion of attachment or of love. A fit object has been proposed to our

heart. God, as manifested to us in the order of nature, was doubtless very lovely. Yet we did not love him, and scarcely understood that he could be loved. Such was the depth of our fall that we were no longer capable of loving what is not seen, nor of seeing what is invisible to the eyes of flesh. Our language to each of the sages who came to speak to us of God was like that of Philip, "Show us the Father." To God himself we said, "Make us gods to go before us." We have been magnificently heard by Him who interprets for good what we think is error. He has shown us the Father; he has given us a God to walk before us. We have known upon the earth, and we again find in heaven, One whom we can love without measure, without end, and without fear; One who can fill our whole heart, and who in filling pacifies, purifies, and ennobles it; a God alike lovely and venerable, a God of happiness and holiness, a God whom we cannot know and contemplate without becoming at once both happier and better. To know him, to be united to him, must be our aim, if we would detach ourselves more and more from the world. By learning to love him we will gird up our loins, and be ready to set out joyfully, or at least resolutely, for any place, any position, any fortune, to which in perfect wisdom he may be pleased to call us.

## TWO COUNSELS OF WISDOM.

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### TWO DISCOURSES ON LUKE XII. 35.

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#### SECOND DISCOURSE.

#### COUNSEL TO THOSE WHO WALK IN THE NIGHT.

“Let your loins be girt about, and your lamps burning.”—LUKE xii. 35.

IN making the Second Part of my text the subject of a separate discourse, I mean not to deny that it is to treat the same subject twice ; for, in the second part of the verse, the duty which Christ enjoins on his disciples is not different from that in the first. In other words, two things are not required to be done in obeying him ; to have the loins girt about is the same thing as to have the lamps burning, to have the lamps burning the same as to have the loins girt about. The thing always required is to be ready for any thing, to put ourselves in a condition to face all difficulties, and provide as far as in us lies, that none of them surmount or overwhelm us. It would seem, then, that in explaining the first claim we have explained the second ; but, brethren, the same subject may have two aspects, or may be looked at from two points of

view. The idea of our text is that of preparation. The object is to provide for the future, but this future is at once a duty to perform, and an ill to endure, a duty requiring strength, an ill demanding patience. Where is the principle of this strength? We have already seen. Where is the source of this patience? This it now remains to see.

We are never patient under an evil except from the consideration of a good. God alone can enable us to support, and, what is better, welcome evil. We are patient, because beforehand we are consoled; so that to say to any one, Act so that evil supervening you may be patient, is to say to him in other words, Provide consolation; fortify yourself with joy; have a happiness to oppose to your misery.

Now, such is the meaning of our Lord's recommendation, "Let your lamps be burning." For, in the language of Scripture, afflictions often take the name of darkness, light is another name for prosperity: "He has led me," says Jeremiah, "into darkness and not into light," so that to have our lamp burning is to lay up a provision of happiness against the days of adversity.

In a burning lamp three things are observable: the lamp itself, the oil, and the flame. The lamp is the soul, with all its natural faculties. This lamp every man at birth receives from the hand of his Creator, some a larger one and more ornate, others smaller and simpler, but all alike fitted to receive the holy oil of truth. For this truth, I mean the excellent tidings of the Gospel, is the oil which this lamp is destined to contain. The flame is the life which the Spirit of God communicates to this truth, which flows unto us from the vessel of the Gospel. Then the lamp is in its perfection; for it gives light not only in that it illuminates our understanding, but also, as indicated by our text, in that it shines gladly in the darkness of affliction, and even in the valley of the shadow of death. This flame, which we are enjoined to keep alive, is that of faith, hope, and love.

I say, brethren, *keep alive*, for Jesus Christ says in my text, "Have," or keep "your lamps burning." But this very precept implies another, "Kindle your lamps;" and another still, "Have oil in your lamps." Why then should we not turn first towards those who have not kindled them, towards those whose lamps are still empty, I mean without oil, for, alas! our lamp is never empty. Have oil in your lamps, kindle your lamps, let us say to them, for darkness is coming, darkness is near, and the lamp of the Christian alone can dissipate it.

The darkness is near, the night comes. It comes at every period of life. It comes to many in the morning, scarcely allowing the sun as he rises time to throw into space a pale and gloomy ray. To a great number, life is less day than night, pierced here and there merely by some livid flashes which serve only, according to the expression of the poet, to make "darkness visible." For all, without exception, there are in life moments of deepest gloom, days of anguish and sorrow, which make even those who are most gently dealt with understand the grievous exclamation of Job, "Why has light been given to the miserable, and life to the sick at heart?" From the very sources of our happiness spring forth bitter sorrows. Our most tender attachments arm death with some of his sharpest darts; for although St. Paul has said with truth that the sting of death is sin, it is true that this sting multiplies itself and makes sharp points of all the flowers with which we deck our heads. Every crown of flowers, sooner or later, becomes a crown of thorns. I wish not, brethren, to give you here a tragical parody of human life, nor conceal from you the visible and numerous traces of the Creator's benevolence. But the happiest of mortals, he who, by an unexampled privilege, should at the end of his career have to recall only recollections of prosperity, (I mean of happiness,) would be a man who had never loved. Had

he loved he would have suffered, suffered in others. Even the general aspect of human life would necessarily have subjected him to the most painful reflections. At all events, it would be necessary for him to die, to quit this abode of delight, and plunge down the slope of death into a darksome future. In the foresight of this inevitable conclusion, not once only, brethren, but daily would he die; yes, daily would he die amid joy; and the liveliest feelings of delight which could thrill his heart would be a kind of wakening to that everlasting sadness which, in a human being, may sleep but never die.

Such is the immutable condition of human life. Incessant warfare is ordained for man here below; we are born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. On whatever destiny we fix our eye, we see it covered with wounds or bruises. As if from envy, every thing reminds us of our inevitable decay. I admit it is impossible for the most unhappy not to see in the world and in his own life, proofs of paternal benevolence, traces of a first design, which was nothing less than the happiness of all. But the unhappiness of man's condition is, nevertheless, an oppressive burden for the heart and mind. This uncertainty of the next moment, those sorrows entwined with all our joys, death always ready to avenge or sport with our passing felicities, all this not merely affects, it astonishes us. Unhappiness seems to us disorder, and in one sense we are right, but this very conviction adds to our unhappiness. We know, besides, that against those numerous and obstinate enemies of our happiness, there is no asylum, that the general law admits of no exception, and that if there is some kind of inequality between man and man during life, the last moment makes all equal. We have then even now, or shall soon have, need to be consoled. If I may so speak, we shall require some happiness to oppose to the inevitable unhappiness. On the approach of darkness



mere human prudence seems to cry, To your lamps, if you have any !

We may try to console ourselves by the idea of our innocence ; we may say to ourselves that the dreadful blow we have just received is not caused by any fault of ours, or even any imprudence. But besides that this salve cannot be applied to the wounds we have made with our own hands, our conscience interdicts this consolation. Though we have not deserved such or such a suffering we have deserved to suffer, and our most insolent murmurings cannot absolutely close our ears against the voice of truth which cries, " Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins ? " Now, then, if you can forget all this, deck yourselves for some instants in an imaginary innocence. If the fault is not on your part, it is on the part of God. God is unjust if you are not so, and as there cannot be injustice with God, your saying this is as much as to say that God exists not. Is this what you call a consolation ? Is it not, on the contrary, gall added to the vinegar, and affliction to the afflicted ?

Against the ills of life we may invoke philosophy. But here philosophy is only the sounding name of a very vulgar thing. After turning it in a thousand shapes all it can say is, that the world is so made that our complaints will not make it different, that it is far better to bear what we cannot change, and that our cries only increase our sore. Here habit knows as much as philosophy, and it is not very honorable to human wisdom, after many windings of a less or greater length, to end at a stupid resignation. All true consolation is joy ; here there is not, there cannot be joy. All true consolation should elevate, but this degrades us. Ought we not, in the name of our dignity, as well as on behalf of our happiness, to seek other consolations ?

We may say to ourselves that all is not lost, and exhort

ourselves to draw relief from what still remains of happiness. This is still philosophy. The mind may thus calculate, but it does not. Until man, in another school than that of philosophy, has recognized his utter unworthiness, he sets no value on what is left to him, but thinks only of what he has lost. Each of us has only to consult his own experience to learn how far in this direction the injustice, ingratitude, and presumption of man can go. I have no wish to blazon its incredible excesses. I confine myself to say, To whom is the consolation sufficient? To whom is it any consolation? All consolation is joy; here, then, where is the joy? All consolation should fill up the vacuity which is found in the life and in the heart; where is this vacuity so filled? Go and say to the man of the world, "This friendship lost is only one friendship less; this child of whom death has just bereaved you is not your only child; or, if the only one, you have still friends; or, if all is gone, you have still yourself; think not of what is gone, but of what remains, for you might have nothing, others have nothing, and you might fall to their level." You are aware, brethren, how he will answer. Besides, how does this consolation apply to life as a whole? Life, so taken, satisfies nobody; nobody, I mean, among those who are reduced to the mere light of philosophy. Will you go and say to them, "Come, here in place of the lost life is another?" Where is this life in exchange? Where is it for any one who has not received the lamp of hope from the hand of God his Saviour?

We may, moreover, steel ourselves against misfortune, we may brave it. But this is not consolation; for sorrow, in one way or other, ends by resuming its rights, or rather it never loses them for an instant. The resistance of pride is only one sorrow more; besides, every one is not capable of it. The greater part of men cannot barter away their need of consolation. Nothing supplies its place, nothing can be

taken in exchange. To blunt the sting of grief, time is better than pride ; for time wears out every thing. But it wears out the soul as well as all the rest. The power of forgetting is only a weakness. Life thus becomes less sorrowful, but it also becomes less serious, less noble. And although we have in a measure forgotten all that we have suffered, life has nevertheless lost its charm. The illusion is gone for ever ; we know what value to set on the promises of life, and whatever events do, they will no longer make us hope for an impossible felicity.

Jesus Christ, the divine Wisdom, has anticipated this conviction ; and on his part we say to you, Mortals, who know what life is, put oil in your lamps, and light them. Let your lamps become, according to the expression which we have used, lamps of faith, hope, and love. The light of life is not happiness, but consolation ; not what we see, but what we do not see ; and, to tell the whole truth, not what we receive, but what we give. According to the full meaning of our Lord's words, " It is more blessed to give than to receive." The brightness of our life consists in believing, hoping, loving. In believing ; that is, in feeling assured of the Father, amid the manifestations of his anger. In hoping ; that is, in laying hold, amid the ruins which gather around us, of the kingdom which cannot be moved. In loving ; that is, in substituting for the care for our own happiness a care for the happiness of others, or, more generally, to place the centre of our life without us ; for, properly speaking, it is only in this that life consists.

And beware of abstracting from this treble flame any one of its rays ; above all, think not that the strongest faith and hope would suffice for happiness without love. The Gospel, which has said that faith and hope are nothing without love, nothing either for happiness or for perfection, the Gospel would contradict you ; your own conscience, your

own experience would contradict you. What have been the true moments of happiness in your life? Are they not those in which you have forgotten yourselves for others? On these occasions has not the intimate relation between happiness and love been instantaneously revealed to you? What your too sure recollections thus disclose to you, does not your reason also disclose? Love, which is the happiness of God himself, must also be the supreme felicity of the being whom God has made in his own image. Every other happiness is unworthy of this being, and does not satisfy him. Selfish enjoyments leave a void; love alone fills and nourishes. Vulgar happiness requires to receive, and has never received enough; love requires to give, and has never given enough. Sacrifices exhaust the one and maintain the other, and while the first would gain nothing by gaining the world, the second grows rich upon its very losses. Faith and hope are of value only because they conduct to love, and the soul would dispense with believing and hoping, if without hoping and believing it were possible to love. Even the happiness of being loved would be incomplete without the happiness of loving; and if the love of God is infinitely precious to man, it is, be assured, by giving place to it, and constraining it, so to speak, to return love for love. The crowning grace of God, the last expression of his love, the sum of the Gospel, the end of the work of redemption in regard to us, is not to be loved but to love. It is when we love that all is accomplished; it is when we love that our salvation is realized. Love is the sovereign good, and therefore in affliction it is also the sovereign consolation. Still more than faith, still more than hope, does it lend to the light of our lamp its liveliest and brightest beams. But, on the other hand, faith and love open the heart to Divine love. By virtue of faith and hope our heart becomes a new heart, becomes at once capable of loving with a pure love all that ought to be loved, and of not suc-

cumbing under the ills which spring from our condition and from love itself. Let us not separate that which is inseparable, let us not abstract any of the elements of consolation; let us repeat that in this world as it has become, in life as it is now constituted, the light of our darkness, the happiness of our woe, consists in a faith founded on God himself, in a hope which looks to him, in a love which ascends to him, that it may thence descend again on mankind and take them all into its embrace.

What ought to delight you, dear brethren, in the consolations, or rather in the joys of the Gospel, is, that they have no need of the aid either of pride or of time, and that they combine in the soul of the sufferer both strength and mildness. When I see mildness without strength, I say to myself, The man is nullified, his internal springs are broken; these are not the proper results of religion. When I see strength without mildness, I say, Here is no consolation, no joy, for joy softens; truth, therefore, is not here. But he who has embraced Jesus Christ by faith, he who in desert climes has again found a Father, he will in grief be at once mild and strong. For what is at once milder and stronger than faith, hope, and love? In the hour of trial expect not from him either lifeless submission or haughty rudeness. He is what man ought to be, armed with courage and adorned with humility; erect before fortune, on his knees before God.

With the oil of the word, with the flame of the Spirit, make the lamp of your soul illuminate your darkness. This I address to you who yet know not the dispensation of God in the Gospel, to you who know it to no purpose, because your heart is not yet touched. Equal to each other in misfortune, subject to the same vicissitudes, you appear in another point of view very different, since there is between you the difference between ignorance and knowledge, or as

we should perhaps say, between faith and unbelief. Is this difference as great as it appears? Neither of you believes this, if faith is nothing less than the life in the soul. What, it will be said, is the lamp without the oil? But what is the oil without the flame? Does he who has oil without flame see better than he who as yet has neither oil nor flame? And cannot the Supreme Giver give at once both oil and flame? I thus see better what it is that unites you than what it is that separates you, and I commend you both to the Father of the spirits of all flesh, praying that in pity to your wants he would give to both of you what is necessary; to the one the knowledge of his Gospel and Christian convictions, to the other that life of the Spirit which alone converts the convictions of the intellect into a true and effectual faith. There will you, for the first time, find light, in other words, joy and happiness; for in Jesus, embraced by faith, resides abundance of consolation, fulness of happiness, to supply the future as the past. To say the whole in two words, you will there receive the assurance of being loved and the power of loving. What more is necessary? What is beyond? What more can be desired, or what more will be vainly desired either by him who is loved or him who loves? What void can remain in the heart or life where there is intimate communion, unchangeable intercourse with the heavenly Father? What darkness will not disappear before so pure and bright a day? What doubt, what fear, what regret, what desire, can tyrannize over a heart which has God in its favor, and which, to speak more properly, possesses and carries him within? When you say that God has raised it to love, do you not say every thing? Love which is stronger than death is stronger than the whole world.

Light this lamp; light it whilst it is day. When darkness after the day is set penetrates your dwellings, you procure an artificial day by lighting a fire; but you take care

not to wait till the darkness is complete, for then it would be difficult to procure what you need in order to dispel it; a very just though feeble image of what prudence demands of you in regard to another light. It is in open day, at noon, in the morning, that you ought to light this lamp. In the full sunshine of prosperity must you provide for the hours of trial. These times of agitation and trouble are ill suited to so great a work. We droop, we struggle, we sink in our sorrow. Leisure is wanting; the mind is no longer free. Scarcely capable of providing against the necessities of the time, it is far less capable of forming principles and giving a new basis to its whole life. For, brethren, no less than this is required. A work of examination, internal observation, and profound meditation must be undertaken and finished amid the most poignant emotions; miracles of peace must be performed amid the horrors of war. Reflect well upon it. How are you to learn all at once, (and when the whole soul is carried in another direction,) the great science of faith, hope, and charity? How renew all your convictions, all your principles, all the habits of your mind, all the tendencies of your soul, in a word, all your being, when imperious grief claims all your thoughts? Were we assured that an artist had put the finishing touch to an exquisite painting, or an astronomer succeeded in making observations of the greatest nicety, on the deck of a vessel, at the very time when the raging storm had thrown down its masts and sprung a dangerous leak, we should not be more astonished. No doubt these great storms of life may have blessed results. Anguish teaches many things; without it what should we know? But without speaking of all the cases in which we suffer uselessly or grow worse by suffering, let us merely observe that we are here speaking of the resources of the soul against sorrow, of the consolation which it requires to find within itself in the hour of trial. Where are those consola-

tions, those gladdening beams, for him who whilst it was day did not kindle his lamp? How many unfortunate beings, wandering in the gloom of sorrow, have gradually approached the abyss, I mean despair, and fallen into it! How many others, sunk in sleep by the same darkness, (for the darkness causes sleep,) have lost all courage, have ceased to provide for themselves, and by this despairing negligence have rendered their misfortune irreparable or boundless! Of how many others has not sorrow unmitigated soured the temper, envenomed the feelings, corrupted the judgment; in fine, spoiled the whole life, not only for themselves, but also for those whose happiness was confided to them! Nothing can weaken, every thing, on the contrary, enforces the exhortation of our Lord, "Let your lamps be burning," that is, Let the approaching night find your lamps burning.

In the climate in which we live the twilight precedes and announces night, and we may, during this interval, prepare torches or lamps. But there are zones in which night, instead of climbing up to the heaven gradually, seizes on it at once, and envelopes all living creatures in sudden darkness. It is with life as with these regions. In human life misfortune comes even more suddenly than darkness in the countries of which I speak. It is for the most of the time an evening without a twilight. The splendor of day falls at once into the dark gloom of night. We suffer without having foreseen it, without having been prepared for it by a decline of happiness, and hence naturally suffer more. Without any thing to break the fall, we tumble to the bottom all bruised and broken. O what bitterness, what trouble, what internal tempest, when the greatest felicity and the deepest misfortune were the one yesterday and the other to-day! What magic words will communicate at once mildness and strength to him whom glory enveloped yesterday and shame to-day,



to another who was yesterday the most envied and to-day is the most wretched of fathers ; to another whom all hopes yesterday intoxicated, and against whom to-day a sudden and incurable infirmity closes all the avenues to future fame ? Will he learn to-day what he knew not yesterday ? Will it be possible to console him if previously unfurnished with consolation ?

Therefore we have reason to say, Light your lamps. But if the Spirit of God himself is the flame of our lamps, does it belong to us to light them ? Who can light them but God only ? This objection is refuted by its own consequences. For it would extend step by step to all our duties, and there being no longer any power there would no longer be any duty. Let us not distinguish between what we can and what we cannot do. For if any thing is above our strength, every thing is above our strength ; and if any thing is within our reach, all things are. Let us say frankly and boldly that man can do nothing, and that he can do every thing ; nothing without God and every thing with God. All the morality of the Gospel rests upon these two foundations. Without God I am insufficient for the least of my duties, with God I am capable of all, even the greatest, even of the duty which includes all others ; I mean the duty of lighting the lamp. And this is the reason why Jesus Christ, who might have said, The Spirit of God will light your lamps, has gone farther, and said, "Light your lamps." In speaking in this way, apparently he knew that we could light them. We can before as after believe on his word, but after as before we say with St. Paul, "I did so, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." The Christian soul unites inseparably the feeling of responsibility with the feeling of dependence.

We say then, without scruple, to you whose lamps are not yet burning, Kindle your lamps ; and in order to kindle

them we commend you to the Gospel, interpreted by your conscience, to your conscience enlightened by the Gospel. But you who have kindled them, have you nothing to do? Are you henceforth sheltered from trial? Have you not, on the contrary, in your character of Christians, particular afflictions to foresee? Or perhaps you think that your lamps, once kindled, will burn of themselves, and never possibly be extinguished. It is written, however, "Quench not the Spirit;" your lamps then may be extinguished. It is written, "Stir up the gift that is in you;" it is thus necessary to keep this flame constantly alive. It is necessary incessantly to lay up a store of happiness for the days of misfortune, and of joy for the hours of sadness. It is necessary to nourish at the bottom of your hearts faith, hope, and love.

For this, under the Divine blessing, three means are at your disposal; namely, contemplation, prayer, and good works. Might I not add, "and these three are one?" By contemplation, I understand the contemplation of Jesus Christ. It is not an effort of thought, though thought is inseparable from contemplation. No; it is a simple, filial, assiduous look to Jesus Christ; I say not to his doctrine, but to Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ, and not Christianity, is our object, our good, our life. To contemplate Jesus Christ, to live with Jesus Christ, to keep society with Jesus Christ, to withdraw to Jesus Christ; to be accompanied by his memory and encircled by his presence, to look to him as the faithful spouse looks to her husband, to refer to him all our thoughts and all our designs, and fill with him our mind and our soul; this is the primary means, or rather the whole means, for it carries with it all the rest.

To pray, that is, to expect nothing except from God; and to expect every thing of God; to keep our soul incessantly open before him; to lay open before the Father, whom Jesus Christ has restored to us, our wants, our fears,

our difficulties ; to place ourselves continually in his hands ; to accept, by anticipation, whatever it may please him to dispense ; to groan before him under a sense of our weakness ; to deposit at his feet the burden of our sins ; to sigh in his presence after the gift of a new heart ; to place ourselves under the rays of his light, under the dew of his grace ; with all the humility of indigence to solicit an asylum under his roof, a place at his hearth ; to take shelter under his mercy, and gain warmth upon his heart ; such is the grace of graces. No wind, no storm will extinguish the lamp of him who prays.

In fine, to act, to abound in works of righteousness and charity, without intermission to fill both our heart and our life into which the world persists in wishing to penetrate, and by this constant and happy preoccupation in well doing to leave no place, no moment, no occasion for evil ; to unite thus more and more with Jesus Christ by resembling him, to breathe the air of heaven beforehand, and have a foretaste of the pure joys of eternity ; to feel as with the hand the reality of that moral order, that kingdom of God invisible to so many eyes ; to walk in some measure by sight in the darkness of this world ; in one word, to obey in order to know, and serve in order to love : such is the third means that is proposed to you. So long as you use it, fear not lest the flame of your lamp become feeble or extinct, lest consolation fail you in the hour of affliction. " By this," says St. John, speaking of the works of love, " by this you shall know that you are of the truth, and shall assure your hearts before God."

Shall you come gradually to find in suffering all the savor of a blessing ? Why not ? Since the time when St. Paul said to the Colossians, " I rejoice in my sufferings," the Lord's hand is not shortened. If every Christian regards the different trials to which he is exposed as a ground of

perfect joy, the grace of God may raise him higher, and put him in a state to feel the joy. But is it not a great matter that he already knows what they are worth, and that with a free and sincere movement he blesses God for them? Wait firmly for this grace, you who have carefully maintained the flame of your lamps. You knew long ago that you are loved, but the hour of affliction will come and teach you how much God loves you. For it is for that hour that God has reserved the most abundant effusions of his grace, and for this even has he prepared that hour. Be assured there is nothing he will refuse to make your days of mourning days of shining light. Thousands have experienced this before you, and thousands more are ready to tell you that never so much as in hours of anguish have they experienced how good the Almighty is. It is the wretched who are grateful. To hear them one would say that prosperity caused their gratitude to fall asleep, and that adversity has awakened it. There is, in fact, a spiritual supernatural joy which rests at the bottom of the Christian soul in tranquil days, and which affliction stirs up and causes to boil over, and which reserves every thing that it has most impressive and thrilling for those very moments when joy seems impossible. This joy of the Spirit does not cause the sorrow of nature to disappear, but neither does this sorrow extinguish that joy. They subsist beside each other, the sorrow furnishing occasion and nourishment to the joy, the joy preventing the excess of sorrow.

God would not hesitate to work wonders in order to turn your sorrow into joy. When in your Gethsemane (for each in his turn enters this garden to sweat blood like the Prince of the just,) you shall in your agony have uttered the mournful cry, "Father, let this cup pass from me," the Father might send angels to your assistance as he did to our generous representative. But Christ needed this assistance, and thanks to him we need it not. The angels who in those

dread times will come with a compassionate hand to support our declining head, and wipe the sweat from our brow, are invisible angels, who will not then come for the first time; for they have long been there, and have never quitted us. These invisible angels are faith, hope, and love, if we have detained them beside us by contemplation, prayer, and good works; or rather he whom we have detained beside us is God himself; God whose Spirit, as he himself has said, "is in distress in all our distresses." "Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we will fear no evil, for God is with us, his rod and his staff comfort us." Yes, in this very darkness, the blackest of all darkness, in the approaches of death, Thou thyself, O Lord! wilt come to comfort thy poor creatures; Thou wilt defend our couch from those visions of terror which ominous appearances and the remembrance of our sins gather around us. Did it seem good to thy wisdom to leave us alone, and without immediate consolation, to perform a part of the journey in the darkness of our cavern, it would be on its issue to give a purer and more brilliant light to the sacred day of redemption. The radiant face of our Saviour will enlighten this darkness; we shall not be long in discerning his mild and beneficent countenance; and, from this moment, assured and enraptured, we shall feel a sublime joy rise and expand in our soul over our fears, our regrets, and it may be our remorse. Beside him what can we fear, what can we want? Shall we not be well wherever he is? Can we be perfectly satisfied wherever he is not? Was not the hope which supplied the place of happiness here below, the hope of possessing him? And if it was sweet in this place of exile to suffer with him, what will it be in heaven to reign with him? O revelations, glory, marvels of a Christian death, how great you are and ravishing! Will it ever be possible for us to pay too dearly for them? Is it to pay too much for the death of

be righteous to die beforehand, and die daily to ourselves, and hide our life with Christ in the bosom of God? O Lord, teach us this death, in order that we may be capable of the resurrection! O Lord, disrobe us of ourselves, and clothe us with Thyself! Make us poor in order that we may be rich! Make us our only treasure! Be our only light in the days of darkness, so that Thou mayest also be our light in days of mourning, and at the hour of final departure!

## SIMON PETER.

### TWO DISCOURSES ON JOHN I. 42; MATT. XVI. 13-18.

"And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, **A stone**."—**JOHN I. 42.**

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—**MATTHEW XVI. 13-18.**

### FIRST DISCOURSE.

A FISHERMAN named Andrew, having heard of Jesus, rose up and followed him. Believing that in him he had found the Messiah or Christ, he imparts the glad tidings to Simon, and takes him to Jesus. "And Jesus," says the Evangelist, "having looked upon him, said, Thou art Simon son of Jonas; thou wilt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a

stone." And as Jesus is not a man, to lie, nor to utter vain words, the expression, "Thou shalt be called a stone," means, thou shalt be a stone, thou shalt be a rock. And this name thereafter attaches to Simon, whose original name is gradually effaced, or seldom appears without being united to his new name. Familiarly, ordinarily, almost without thinking of it, the disciples of Jesus give their fellow disciple the name of *stone* or *rock*. To us, too, he is now known, so to speak, only under this solemn mystical name. God, in his eternal decrees, had called him beforehand by his name as he called Cyrus. Peter he was before he was born to mortal life, Peter he is in the Church to the end of ages, Peter he shall be in eternity.

Were it not of itself very clear that Jesus Christ says nothing, does nothing, without a serious meaning, we might find proof in another place that it was of set purpose and very seriously that he had conferred on his disciple this name, at once impressive and imposing. He confirms it on a solemn occasion. The people are at once moved and divided on the subject of the man of Nazareth. On one point only are they agreed: that certainly he is a great personage, so great indeed that they cannot believe he belongs to the present generation (for it is to the things and the men of the past that our regards are preferably given); he is doubtless one of the great men whom God has taken to glory; either John the Baptist, who has just perished, or Elias, or Jeremiah, or some one of the prophets. Jesus asks his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter, says the historian, Simon the rock, (for thus only was he now called,) takes speech, and answers, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus immediately replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jonas; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee (just as if he had said, Thou hast named me, I name



thee,) thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Thus, then, at the beginning and towards the end of his ministry Jesus solemnly imposed the name of Peter on the son of Jonas, first when Simon had neither done nor said any thing to furnish Jesus Christ with any occasion for it, and a second time on the utterance of a sentence or profession of faith by this same apostle.

We propose, brethren, to lay before you some reflections on what Jesus did on these two occasions; we wish to speak to you on this sovereign substitution of a new name to that which the son of Jonas had received at his birth. But it is necessary to begin with explaining the new name, the eminently significant name which Jesus Christ bestows on Simon.

I speak, brethren, of the new name only. We might try to explain the old one. You are probably aware that even among ourselves there is not a name without a meaning, but with regard to most names this meaning has gradually disappeared from successive changes on the words. It was not so among the Hebrews. Every name signified something, because they did not wish, did not admit any name which did not awaken some idea. The wishes, the hopes, the affections, the recollections, of a family were openly expressed in the name which a child received. In this respect, however, it would not be worth while to explain the name of Simon, and that of Jonas his father. But more than once, perhaps, in choosing the name of his child the father was unconsciously directed by Providence, and it sometimes happened also that God explicitly pronounced his will in this respect. Thus the name of John, which signifies the grace or gift of the Almighty, was brought by an angel to Zacharias, father of the forerunner; and the very common name of Jesus, or Saviour, was by the express will of God, the human

name of Jesus Christ. There are cases in which a very striking relation between the name of a personage and his character or life, scarcely permits us to doubt that God did interfere with the determination of the family. How can we but admire the arrangement by which he to whom the Anointed of the Lord exclaimed on the road to Damascus, "Why persecutest thou me?" bore during the first period of his life the name of Saul or Saül; in other words, that of the unhappy prince who also persecuted an anointed of the Lord in the person of David? As to the individual spoken of in our text, without going further, we simply say that Simon signifies *listening*, and Jonas, *dove*. What lovely names, as applied to the Gospel! how exact the expression of what was in fact the character of the Apostle, as amiable as he was venerable; and how easily will every Christian understand that he who worthily bears the name of *listening* and *dove* deserves also that of *rock*.

But what we have to do with here is the new name which Simon received. Jesus on two occasions called him Cephas, that is, *stone*. This name has no appearance of obscurity, and yet we would not be sure of properly seeking and entering fully into our Saviour's idea if we were confined to the text. Jesus Christ becomes his own interpreter, in the words of St. Matthew, which we place beside those of St. John. We might have believed (and who knows not but the son of Jonas also believed?) that the name of Peter was a pre-announcement of the immovable firmness which characterized him as an apostle of Jesus Christ. If he thought so it was a great error, and the subject of great humiliation; and a moment was to arrive when this name which attaches to his person, and by which his Master and his companions continued to designate him, was to seem to him, shall I say, a cruel mockery? Without speaking of his unhappy denial, and of his flight with the other disciples, was it truly the

firmness of conviction, the firmness of charity, that appeared in those acts of presumption, those extravagances, which were generous, no doubt, but in which the flesh and the blood performed so great a part? It was, therefore, under a different idea that Jesus Christ called him Peter; and this idea he has himself declared, "On this rock I will build my Church."

There is no reference, then, directly at least, to the character of St. Peter, but to his calling and his work. The Church of the Lord was to be built upon him. Not as if St. Peter was to be the foundation of the Church, since there is only one Foundation, one Corner-stone, namely, Jesus Christ. Peter himself was to be laid on this foundation, from which, like all the other stones of the building, he derived his strength; but he was after Jesus Christ, in the name and on the part of Jesus Christ, a stone on which the Church of Jesus Christ, like a living temple, would arise.

The Church, in a certain sense, existed before this was said. As soon as some individuals believed in Jesus Christ and followed him, there was a Church; and this little congregation, still wholly passive, seated in silence at the feet of Jesus, carried in their hands, in their heart, in their faith, the destinies of the world. In this view, perhaps, our Saviour said to this handful of obscure individuals, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." However, in another sense, the Church did not yet exist. The active spontaneous Church, representing and continuing Jesus Christ, the Church, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all, dates only from the death of Jesus Christ, who was to draw all men unto him only after he should be lifted up; or, to speak still more precisely, it dates from the communication of the Holy Spirit, which was to the disciples of our Lord the expected and wished for signal. The history of Christianity has an earlier date; the his-

tory of the Church opens on the day of Pentecost. On that day, with the ministry of the Word, begins the erection of the new temple.

What then, in this great work, is the work, the part, the character of Simon? Does what he was, and what he did, justify our Saviour's words, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church?"

Let us agree here, brethren. If in order to justify these words it was necessary (as many have supposed) that Peter should have been, not only for the whole body of the faithful, but for his companions in the apostleship, the supreme authority in matters of doctrine, the source of truth, the final judge in all questions, Peter has not justified the imposing title which his Master gave him. The whole apostolic Church, which did not recognize these attributes, must then have been unbelieving; and so must Peter have been, since he has not claimed them. Neither did the apostles submit to Peter, nor did Peter ever assert his right to it. Parties, each of whom gave themselves a chief among the apostles, appear in the first churches. Peter, without wishing it, had his own party in the church of Corinth; where several gave him an exclusive preference over Apollos and Paul. This party, if Peter had in fact had the supreme authority with which he is invested in spite of himself, was necessarily the good party, or rather, was not a party, was the Orthodox Church. Yet St. Paul calls it a party, and blames those who attach themselves to Cephas, or Apollos, or himself, instead of attaching themselves simply and directly to Jesus Christ. Paul rebukes St. Peter for a practice closely connected with doctrine. Paul counts it an honor to have so acted, and Peter does not protest. Nowhere does Peter either exercise or affect an authority superior to that of the other apostles; nowhere is he, as regards them, the supreme and final appeal, and when he is consulted along with others, who like him

are called pillars, (because they had been with the Lord,) aye, on the very occasion when, if ever, it would seem he ought to have shown himself pope in the full meaning of the term, his only distinction is that he speaks first. He gives his opinion, does not impose it. He is not even the president of this assembly, nor the moderator of this discussion. He throws into it no other weight than that of a wisdom full of humility. In fact, on this truly singular occasion, nothing exhibits in him the pretensions which at a later period, and on the very tomb of this humble apostle, have been reared up in his name. What remains to be extracted from the Gospel in favor of these same pretensions? Nothing; unless we choose to say that Peter is named oftener than the other apostles, and usually first; that he more frequently is spokesman, sometimes as a worthy organ of his fellow disciples, but sometimes also, in his haste, organ of a carnal wisdom and an indiscreet zeal; so much so, that in the very chapter in which Jesus Christ confirms his name of Peter, he also, a few lines further on, calls him Satan, on account of his words. If then on saying to Simon, "Thou art Peter," Jesus Christ transformed the Christian republic into a monarchy, if Jesus raised his disciple to a throne, Jesus spoke in vain; for Simon never was what on this supposition he ought to have been.

Simon was a rock on which the Church of Christ was to be built. Whatever be the meaning of these words, they do not signify, they do not express that Peter was to be the apostle of apostles, and alone invested with infallibility among those first disciples who were all witnesses like him of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, all partakers like him of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. And if, without claiming for Peter himself what the history of the apostolic Church too evidently denies him, it is claimed for his See, for his successors, (supposing him to have had a See and suc-

cessors,) if the simple declaration, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church," has this interpretation given to it, not Peter himself, but, him excepted, all who have been bishops of Rome, have the benefit of the promise which was made to him alone, and have by themselves alone succeeded to the authority of all the sees and of all the apostles; if the words of Jesus Christ, null as regards Peter himself, signify all this in behalf of those who have succeeded him in the government of a particular community, then right is founded upon fact instead of fact upon right; in other words, the texts giving no authority to a human establishment, recourse is had to the interpretation of the texts after the establishment. The meaning of the Divine expressions is sought in the institution, instead of the institution being judged by the words. By this monstrous perversion, all the principles of interpretation, the basis of all belief, are shaken, and the meaning of Scripture is left to arbitrary decision. All landmarks are removed, and the field of truth is thrown open to the fury of the most extravagant doubts. In one word, by a presumptuous affirmation, right has been given beforehand to all negations. We are not going too far, brethren. Owing to affirmation without proof, to contradictions without evidence, the simplest minds have been rendered suspicious, the firmest mind wavering and uncertain, and skepticism has forced its way both into the Church and society.

Thus then, brethren, the promise of Jesus Christ to Simon has not, cannot have the extravagant meaning which has been given to it. On the other hand, our Lord's words have certainly some meaning; shall we go far to seek it, brethren? Does it not offer itself to the first glance?

Though the Evangelist and the historian of the Acts had left St. Peter on the same level with all the rest of the apostles, there would be no ground for astonishment at the

prediction of our Lord with regard to him. The edifice of the Church would not have rested principally upon him, but it would have rested on him in some degree, and we would always be able, after eighteen centuries, to regard Simon as the rock out of which we have been hewn. Had Jesus Christ, calling him by a different but equally true name, said to him, Thou art bread, and with this bread I will feed my Church, or, Thou art living water, and with this water I will refresh my Church, none of us would conclude that Paul, and John, and James, and Apollos, and Timothy, have nothing to claim in this significant appellation. Has not Jesus Christ, who is properly the bread and the living water, transformed his apostles into bread and living water? And how can we deny them to have been rocks, and parts of the rock on which the church has been built? Thus, then, though Simon had remained in the shade or twilight in which other apostles remained, the expression of Jesus Christ in regard to him would find its justification in the mere fact of the apostleship of Simon, and the general certainty we should have of his having labored with all the others for the progress of the Gospel upon the earth. It would still, no doubt, require to be considered why he alone among all the apostles should have his name changed by his Master, why he alone was surnamed *Peter*; but in whatever way we should explain this specialty, or even should we be obliged to give up the attempt to explain it, the name assigned him by Jesus Christ should, nevertheless, appear appropriate and true, and the declaration of the Master should still find its full confirmation in the services which Simon, concurrently with others, should have rendered to the cause of the Gospel. As in some respects St. Peter is evidently raised above the level, we are accustomed, brethren, and very properly, to attach to the words of our Lord a more special idea; but this implies not that on inferior ground, I mean without dis-

tion, the activity of Peter would not have fulfilled the promise. Erase in idea every thing that distinguishes him, every thing in the Gospel history that assigns to him a special importance, and you will not find, I venture to assure you, that the words of the Master were pronounced in vain. They might mean more, but might also mean less. Only the facts have proved that more was meant.

But verily it did mean more, and the fulfilment has not merely been exact, but rich, superabundant, striking. Not only has Peter formed part of the living rock on which the Church has been slowly reared, but Peter has been in himself alone a rock; Peter has, in a certain sense, been the rock on which our Lord has built. We must explain.

In every work, brethren, if we ascend to the principle, we find that God does all, and shares not his glory with any other. But if we lower our view we discover helps. Men are workers with him because he has so pleased. To him, no doubt, belong their works as well as themselves whom he has created and fitted to do the work. Nevertheless they have worked with him, and the work which comes from him has, been done by them. Now God, when consenting to let a work be human, subjects it to all human conditions, and particularly to this one, that all who are employed under his eye have not, in this work, a part either exactly equal, or exactly alike. In all works in which several men concur together, even were all equally devoted, there is a kind of drama in which all do not perform the same part. There always are, there must always be, men who take the initiative, men made for beginning undertakings, paving the road, setting the example. Their character is a character apart, which, with an equal degree of devotedness and fidelity, some have received, others not. When any important step is to be taken, every society, however free, looks out for some individual better qualified than others to perform it;



and in works, the object of which is the establishment of the heavenly kingdom, God never fails to raise up similar individuals. So long as human nature is what it is there will be men on whom the initiative devolves, there will be such men in the domain of religion as every where else. In any of the great movements which have renewed the face of the world, or the condition of the human intellect, the multitudes have never dispensed with a head. They look out for him not to get ideas, but because they have them; for, if they had not, they would not look for him. They seek him that he may act in accordance with these ideas, in order to realize them. Rather they have no difficulty in finding him. The keenest, the strongest, not always the best or the most enlightened, advances; sometimes advances quite alone and on his own account, but the standard which he raises soon gives him an army. Thus Luther advanced at first with a dubious and yet uncertain step. He carried within him, but in a more profound and distinct form, the obscure idea of a multitude. He spoke it aloud, and the multitude recognized it, recognized themselves, and through the perils of a dangerous war followed him who, so to speak, by a word made them acquainted with themselves. The renewed Church found its man of action in Luther, as the infant Church found hers in St. Peter. St. Peter, with miraculous gifts, is the Luther of the primitive Church, as Luther, confined to more ordinary gifts, is the St. Peter of the Reformation. And it is on considering what this Apostle was to the rising Church, and consequently to the Church of all times, that we feel obliged to attach a special and very personal meaning to our Saviour's declaration, "Thou art Peter."

Already in this Church not yet constituted, in this Church still under a kind of tutelage, which Jesus Christ had gathered around his person, Peter above others attracts and fixes our regard. His Master has not assigned to him

the first place ; for the first place belongs to no one, and we remember that an indiscreet question, not of Peter but of the mother of two other disciples, called forth from the lips of our Lord the memorable declaration, "Let him who would be greatest among you be the servant of all." Still less has St. Peter been invested by his Master with any species of authority over his colleagues. Not one word of such a meaning proceeded from his Master's lips. But whose is the name which occurs most frequently if it is not Peter's ? Who is it that acts as organ to the disciples when they apply to Jesus Christ but this same Peter ? To whom does our Lord more frequently address his discourse than to Peter ? For it must be carefully observed that this attention, which Peter involuntarily attracts to himself by his mere character, by a more active zeal, a more conspicuous affection,\* Jesus Christ contributes to procure for him. Jesus Christ has, if not greater intimacy, (we know the contrary,) at least more external relations with him than with the rest of the apostles. He gives him more of his attention, he makes him the object of special solicitude ; he prepares him, exercises him, tries his fitness, so to speak, for a future situation. He is an instrument which he tunes, a metal which he refines, a weapon which he sharpens. To no other does he give such particular care, and one would say that Peter being formed beforehand for the apostleship, all others will be formed of course. Thus, then, the character of Peter carries him always like a valiant soldier in the van, and the will of his Master keeps him there. It keeps him there so evidently, that uniformly in the Gospel his name begins the list of the disciples, and when the leading ones only are mentioned, he stands there first also. So strongly is this distinction or pre-

\* *Emicat ardens*. This expression of an ancient poet gives the sum of Peter's character.

unmistakably overruled and recognized; as incontrovertible is the fact. Was it then without an end, was it without a regard to the future, that Jesus Christ, who was better understood, better known by another of the disciples, enters thus into the character of Simon, and allows him to fill so great a space in the history of those times?

Thus even before action, the man of action was revealed. Thus we know beforehand who will be the advance guard when the army begins to march. And in fact when the signal was given, when amid the rushing of a mighty wind the apostles, met to celebrate the last Jewish Pentecost, heard the grand hour of departure sound, there was no indision, no division among them as to the great captain who was to march at their head. For a long time this part devolved on Peter, and it was only on his failure that another could take it up. When the disciples were still waiting for the Comforter, when a hundred and twenty persons, the first fruits of the thousands and thousands still contained in the Divine hand, wrestled in prayer with a view to other wrappings that must soon arrive, Peter, pre-occupied with action and government, called for the election of a twelfth apostle as a substitute for him who, according to the fearful expression of Scripture, "had gone to his place." After the effusion of the Holy Spirit, manifested all at once by the gift of tongues, when the multitude of Jews who had come to the festival, and whose priests had not yet had time to poison their minds; when this multitude, deeply moved, solicit an explanation, or rather a direction, it is Peter who answers, it is Peter who proclaims the advent of the worship in spirit and in truth. It is he who invites these first fruits from among the nations to be baptized, he whose powerful words in a few instants creates and constitutes a Christian Church of three thousand souls in the heart of the city which has just slain Christ. Some days elapse. Peter, sustained by

that faith, a single grain of which removes mountains, performs in presence of the people a miraculous cure. This furnishes him with the text of a new sermon for which he is put in irons, but which calls five thousand souls more to the profession of the new faith. Thus Jesus Christ, by the ministry of Peter, has already a whole people in that very city where so short a time ago some few friends were secretly encouraged by the remembrance of his words. The captivity of Peter neither annuls nor suspends its influence, and we see one during his absence occupying the place which he leaves vacant. His liberty had brought him before the multitude; his captivity, so to speak, brings him before the members of the Jewish priesthood. To them, as to the multitude, he announces the merciful counsel of the Father of men; and John, the companion of his captivity, breaking silence for the first time, joins him in that declaration whose calmness and simplicity carry dismay into the soul of the priests, and condemn them to inaction: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God, judge ye." Set at liberty, he resumes his place amid the apostles; and, in decisive and solemn circumstances, it is still he whom we see appear. The first of the two miracles of terror performed under the Gospel belongs to Peter. At his voice Ananias and Sapphira expiate a hypocritical lie by a sudden death. Instruction belongs equally to all, for all as well as he have received the Holy Spirit, but action, the initiative, are proper to him; until the centres having multiplied, and the first church having engendered several churches, each gradually becomes what the first was, and receives equally the impulse of some man of action, who will be, as it were, the Simon Peter of this new community. However, until they are consolidated, and in order that they may be so, Peter interposes and shows himself every where. The teaching of Philip has caused a new harvest to spring

up in Samaria. St. Peter, who did not see it, goes to bind it up in bundles. This Church required only to be constituted and organized, and it is Peter who constitutes and organizes it. This he does every where; for it is said, "Peter visited all the churches." Is this enough? No, brethren; another task is committed to Peter. It is the formal introduction of the Gentile world into the Church. Here, again, instruction is less apparent than action. Peter has neither discovered, nor conceived, nor reasoned, on the universality of the gift of God; only a vision, the purport of which at first escapes him, prepares him for unexpectedly meeting with a new truth, or a new development of the great evangelical truth. It is not so much he that teaches as he that is taught, when an order from God having taken him to the house of the centurion Cornelius, he there finds his vision explained; and when, seeing the Holy Spirit bestowing his gifts and stamping his seal on men who are neither Hebrews nor descendants of Hebrews, he has now only to proclaim the surprising tidings of the calling of the Gentiles, and exclaim with the prophet, "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear! . . . Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations! . . . For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles." Is. liv. What are the old prejudices of Peter against such a manifestation? Who (as he himself expresses it,) can forbid that those who have received the Holy Spirit should be baptized with water? Will this frank and resolute man hesitate? He hesitates not. He throws down the barrier which till this hour he had thought immovable. He ceases to be a Jew at the same time that these neophytes cease to be heathens. He pours the water of baptism on all those profane heads, and under the roof of the centurion Cornelius the greatest promise is fulfilled, and a boundless prospect opens.

Till now, brethren, your eye encountered only the name and traces of Peter. You continue to look for him. He appears no more. The shadow covers his person; silence shrouds his name. His work is not ended. He will still labor much, till his last and fruitful labor of martyrdom; but since he has given to the evangelization of the world an impulse which will never be arrested, his part is no longer the same. In fact, and silently, he abdicates the primacy with which the force of circumstances and the will of his Master had invested him. Like the dictator of ancient Rome, he returns to his plough; and if henceforth any thing distinguishes him, if any pre-eminence can be claimed for him, I think it is that of humility. Who can read, who has ever read the letters of this holy apostle, without being struck with this character above all others? Where is the impetuous Simon who strikes the high priest's servant? Where is the presumptuous Simon who dares to say to his Lord, "Though all should deny thee, yet will not I deny thee?" Where is the rash Simon, who, opposing the fulfilment of the ministry of Jesus Christ, exclaims to him, "God forbid! that will not happen to thee." He has disappeared, brethren, and his place knows him no more. But where also is the Simon who denied his Master and his Friend? I now find only a man emptied of himself, and wholly full of his Saviour; effacing, annihilating himself, not only before Him, but before those whom he himself led to battle; a grave, meek, pious, modest servant of God and man; an admirable model of humility and candor.

## SIMON PETER.

TWO DISCOURSES ON JOHN I. 42; MATT. XVI. 13-18.

"And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, A stone."—JOHN I. 42.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—MATTHEW XVI. 13-18.

### SECOND DISCOURSE.

BRETHREN, now that we know in what sense Jesus Christ gives the name of Peter to the son of Jonas, it remains to consider what instruction we ourselves may derive from this remarkable fact. Will it be necessary to go far in searching for it? Will it be at all necessary to search for it? Is it probable that the conduct of our divine Master, in so grave

a conjuncture as the solemn calling of one of his apostles to a post of such importance to the destinies of the Church, that among the sayings of our Saviour, one which brings out in highest relief the supreme authority with which he was invested, is it probable that all this, which had such mighty consequences on the future prospects of the world, has no instruction for us? No; that is not probable, nor even possible. These things, like all others, have been written for our instruction, that we may believe, and believing, have eternal life. Let us, then, begin anew to study the fact which furnished the materials of the former Discourse; now, however, to instruct ourselves in the ways of the Lord, and penetrate as far as we can, or may be useful to us, into the secrets of his Providence.

The first thing which strikes us in our text is, that Jesus Christ gives Simón a significant and prophetic name before Simon has done any thing or said any thing which can give a presage of what he is afterwards to become. This we have seen. It was a first meeting, and nothing gives ground to suppose that Jesus Christ had gathered the least information respecting Simon. He fixes on this new-comer one of those penetrating looks which doubtless went from the features to the inmost soul, and without questioning, without having made him speak, he says to him, "Thou art Simon, son of Jonas;" (thus telling him his first name, which perhaps he had never heard pronounced,) "Thou art Simon, son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, *a stone*." If you suppose that he spoke thus without regard to what Simon was; if you suppose that Jesus said to himself, I mean that the man whom they are going to bring to me, or are bringing to me this moment, shall be the rock, the stone on which my Church will be reared; and if this man has actually become so, how shall we sufficiently admire the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, to whom all instru-



ments are good, because his power becomes their power, and his light their light! How can we sufficiently admire his having been able to make the first corner, by the mere power of his word, by a single act of his will, the indispensable promoter of so difficult a work! If it may be said that the Gospel is a second Genesis, it may also be said that the calling of the son of Jonas is a true creation. Jesus Christ is then indeed the Son and the image of Him who speaks and it is done, of Him who calls things which are not as if they were. You are perfectly entitled to abide by this first supposition, which certainly is to the glory of Jesus Christ, but I do not dwell upon it. Jesus Christ, before saying to Simon "Thou art a stone," fixed his eye upon him. This could not be in vain. With a single look he penetrated Simon; from this moment Simon was known to him. Brethren, shall we admire this Divine penetration less than we just now admired this Divine power? Is it less strange, is it less wonderful, to say of a man on first sight what he is and what he will be, and to change his name on this foresight, than to prepare him, whatever he may be in himself, to become one day what it is meant he should be? You may choose. For ourselves, we are in both cases equally struck with the authority, the majesty of Jesus Christ. In both cases we recognize in Jesus Christ him to whom all power has been given, in heaven and on earth, him to whom the Spirit has been given without measure. But we believe he knew St. Peter, and chose him for what he was. We go further: we believe that the conduct of Jesus Christ on this occasion exhibits the ordinary conduct of God.

God, who of stones could raise up children to Abraham, can manifest his sovereignty by producing an effect from a cause apparently contrary to it. I say, brethren, *apparently contrary*, for in reality how do we know that it is really so? If you except *miracles*, properly so called, (which, rightly

understood, are manifestations of creative power, partial creations subsequent to the general creation,) what is the work of God in which we can say with certainty that God interposes as Creator? When he employs an object according to the perfect knowledge which he has of it, he draws from it effects which we, who have infinitely less acquaintance with the object, cannot expiscate. This power is no less divine than the other; and we must never forget that he himself at first made the beings whom he chooses, and prepared the instruments which he employs. We ought not, then, to be afraid of lowering the idea of God by supposing that in the accomplishment of his designs he has regard to the nature of objects, though he probably takes pleasure in confounding our thoughts by seeking his means where we should only have found obstacles. No more ought we to fear lest this supposition should bring us into contradiction with Scripture. For if Scripture tells us that God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and things which are not to bring to nought things which are, (1 Cor. i. 27, 28,) it is necessary to understand that the weak things of this world are not things absolutely weak, and that the things of which it is said that they are not, on the contrary, *are* or *exist* in the strongest sense of the term. If, as Jesus Christ teaches us, what is great in the sight of man is abomination in the sight of God, we are entitled to reverse the proposition, and say that what is little in the eyes of man is full of glory in the eyes of God; that what in the eyes of man is nothing or is not, is real and even important in the view of God, the only infallible valuator. Under the term nothing, as opposed to being, or littleness, opposed to greatness, what are we often to understand but *spirit*, which is invisible, opposed to *matter*, which is seen? We must not, then, be hasty in our judgment. We must not confound the wonderful and the miraculous, nor make the latter the law of Di-

vine government. The works of God are too perfect, the knowledge which he has of them too intimate, the power with which he determines their relations too sovereign, that it should be habitually necessary for him (unless for the purpose of confounding our unbelief or encouraging our faith) to recur to absolute creation, which is, as we have said, the characteristic of miracle. Generally speaking, what he has done is sufficient for what he wishes to do; and to this all the spheres of creation bear testimony. Newton predicted that after the lapse of an immense period it would be absolutely necessary for the Creating Hand to interpose anew. What a Christian philosopher judged indispensable, an infidel philosopher has proved superfluous. La Place has proved that the Supreme Arranger of the universe has provided for all, and that an element overlooked by Newton guarantees the peace of the firmament to the last limits of the existence of worlds. Certainly when the Almighty calls forth Moses from the recesses of the desert and the midst of his flocks to found an independent nation, and prepare from afar the great gathering of nations reserved for the Son of David, he makes use of weakness to confound strength, and brings what is out of what was not. Nevertheless when Moses, astonished at his mission, alleges his slow tongue and embarrassed utterance, what does the Almighty, while rebuking the unbelief of Moses, and reminding him that he, the Almighty, made the mouth of man, makes the deaf and the dumb, the seeing and the blind, what does he? He says to Moses, "Is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth, and I will be with thy mouth and his mouth." Thus the Almighty, who might have given Moses an eloquent tongue, leaves him as he is; but gives him for companion and organ a man naturally eloquent.

St. Peter was chosen in the same spirit as Aaron was.

We have seen in the former discourse a part at least of what pointed out the son of Jonas to the choice of Jesus Christ, and to the special mission which was to be his lot. We will not go back to this. But what it now becomes necessary to say is, that when God has begun he continues ; that nothing comes incomplete from his mighty hand ; that when he has chosen an instrument he perfects it ; he, so to speak, cultivates it so as to render it entirely fitted to the use which he means to make of it ; he conducts it step by step, sometimes by difficult and mysterious paths, which are afterwards recognized with admiration. Jesus Christ having chosen the son of Jonas, thenceforth, if I may so speak, engaged in his education. How much had to be done to discipline that wild energy, to regulate that impassioned vivacity, to purify that too carnal zeal, to humble that presumptuous ardor ! Parents, teachers, pastors, come and study in the divine school of Jesus Christ. Come to this normal school, and learn perseverance, skill, that inexhaustible indulgence, and that courageous charity which does not spare a beloved pupil any of the conditions of a painful novitiate. Jesus Christ directly or indirectly educated all his apostles ; but with what special solicitude did he educate the Apostle, on whom, as on a rock, his Church was to be built ! You might perhaps have thought that the disciple whom Jesus loved, that St. John would be the object of his greatest care. Assuredly he did provide for the education of St. John. It was given, if we may so express it, on the bosom of Jesus. St. John was nourished in silence by the words of his Master, was penetrated with his spirit, appropriated his divine secrets. For a period still distant he treasured up remembrances and inspirations of infinite value. A pure and peaceful star, he was not to rise on the horizon of the Church ; he was not to shed the full light of his instructions upon it until all the other apostles had acted and spoken ;

and his word, like the last fruit of the season, was to be the magnificent, new, unexpected complement of the lessons of a St. Peter, a St. James, a St. Paul. It was for this future that he warmed himself, that he ripened silently in that intimacy, at once glorious and humble, with a Master whom it was given him above all the other disciples well to know and understand. His education, begun by Jesus Christ, was to be finished slowly in the solitude and meditation of old age. But Simon's hour was less distant. It was about to strike. The first blows in the war which was preparing were to be struck by him. His was moreover a mighty nature, but rude, full of roughnesses, formed of the strongest contrasts; and there was such a connection between his qualities and his defects, that it would perhaps have been impossible for any other instructor to lop off the defects without impairing the qualities. The highly privileged and sometimes apparently exclusive attention of which St. Peter was the object on the part of Jesus Christ, may enable us to estimate at once both the difficulty of the task and its high importance.

Questions, addresses, reprimands, nothing is spared; every thing is lavished. Jesus Christ teaches St. Peter by facts as by words. He dwells with him, he makes him his agent and representative; he puts him beforehand into contact with his future part, and makes it habitual to him. In fine, he, in his providence, exposes him to a trial under which St. Peter falls; but it is to raise him humbler, meeker, stronger. After all the vicissitudes of a necessary novitiate, he consecrates him personally and apart from all the other disciples to the apostleship which he is to exercise along with them; and, strange to say, this consecration to the holy ministry has the character of an absolution.

We have learned by the example of St. Peter, that when God destines an individual to serve as the instrument to his designs, still more when he means to place him as a rock in

the foundations of his Church, he has regard to his natural qualities, and afterwards with admirable art forms him gradually for the employment with which he means to invest him. Must I now add that he gives him the essential condition of such a ministry in all its stages, the quality without which all others are nothing, consequently that which God cultivates with the greatest care, namely, faith; I mean faith in the great mystery of godliness which the Gospel reveals, God manifest in the flesh? It were strange and contradictory if, while the kingdom of God on earth consists precisely in this faith, is founded on this faith, we could without this faith, without the profession of this faith, take an active, direct, and leading part in the establishment of the reign of God upon earth. No; all natural gifts are little in comparison with this spiritual gift; all talents are vain, and their culture lost pains, if this faith does not purify, transform, sanctify them. This is the twofold observation which we have to make on the son of Jonas. On the one hand, his natural qualities could not have made him the head of the rising Church, unless in so far as he was by his faith a living member of it; and on the other hand, his natural qualities themselves could only from his faith have received this maturity and form which might render them profitable to the Church of God.

Can it be necessary, brethren, to prove the first of these truths? How can one without being a member of a society become its leader or conductor? And how can one be a member, without having espoused either its principles or its interests? This may be applied to every society, even to political societies. The man who would govern it without understanding it would be its tyrant. He would never be its leader. But how much more true is this of a society wholly spiritual? Such a society being founded in the view of certain principles, and having no other end than

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their promulgation, can only choose for leader a man who loves them, and consequently professes them. Now the principle of Christian society is, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. Away from this principle, this society has no principle. This truth falling, it falls. For it has no longer any end, any reason to exist, and even its name is no more than a name. It is this which authorizes us to say that the rock of Christ is not Peter personally, but the word which he addresses to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." At different periods, however, attempts have been made to rear the edifice of the Christian Church on another foundation. As the centre of this Church has been assumed a Jesus, who is not the Christ, not the Son of the living God. This fictitious, false society, had stolen the name of Church, and we cannot help wondering with fear at the fatal dexterity which, in proscribing the thing, takes care to preserve the name. By this means alone, by imposing on the minds of men, could the enemy obtain any success. Be this as it may, the declaration of St. Peter being suppressed, the Church and Christianity became only vain words, the ministry only an usurpation, the sacraments a sacrilegious sport. The meaning, the truth of all these things is only in these words of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" thou art the Christ, the anointed of the Lord, possessed of that threefold unction, which, under the ancient law, was shared between kings, priests, and prophets. Thou art the king of mankind, thou art the sovereign prophet to whom the Spirit was given without measure, thou art the eternal priest, offering to God in thy life and in thy death the reparation of which sacrifice is only the emblem. Thou art the Son of the living God, of that God, who is not a pure conception of our intellect and, so to speak, a longing of our reason, but of that God who, distinguishing himself or detaching himself from his creation, has produced him-

self to us as a person, has manifested himself within the circle of time, has mingled his history with our history, has shed his remembrance over ages; and, in regard to man, has ceased to be a thought or a necessity to become a being, a personal God, a true God. To say all in one word, Thou art the Mediator, uniting in thyself all the fulness of divinity, and all the fulness of humanity, the living tie between God and man; in whom, by fact and substantiality, are reconciled the eternal Creator, and the creature formed in his image. Thy death has consummated, has consecrated this reconciliation; but, Oh, only Son of the holy God, by assuming our flesh and our condition, thou hast effected this already; already was human nature restored in thy person, and thy death authorized every individual to whom this humanity belongs, to share in this general restoration! Yes, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God; thou art so, since thou art not a meteor of history, a delusion of fancy, a phantom, a dream of the human mind. Thou art nothing, less than nothing for conscience and salvation, or thou art indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, or there is no Church. What do I say? No Church? No hope, no future, no heaven, no God; and a little dust moistened with a few tears, expresses the whole destiny of poor human nature!

What semblance is there that without believing, without loving, without proclaiming this truth, one can be the minister, far less the rock of the Church? But it must be added that this faith alone can raise the natural gifts of an apostle of the Gospel to the highest of their distinction. This faith which is religious truth, includes also moral truth. It is the centre and link of all the virtues. To speak more properly, by it, and it alone, each quality becomes a virtue. Without



it the most precious qualities become obstacles, and what seemed the safest shores, become dreadful rocks. It alone appropriates, tempers, accords, conciliates, animates without agitating, elevates without troubling, develops with harmony. What is carnal and passionate in our best feelings is rejected as impure dross by this divine flame, and the metal washed, so to speak, by fire, is thereafter fit for all the uses of the sanctuary. Prudence becomes zealous, and zeal becomes prudent; rashness is formed into courage, conviction no longer borrows its strength from the spirit of contention, enthusiasm learns patience, devotedness accustoms itself to dispense with glory, and even with success; so much so, that he who has only sown, frankly rejoices with him who reaps. In fine, severity detracts not from tenderness, nor tenderness from severity. Thus, at once fervent and subdued, obedient and free, the believer carries to his work both the advantages of the natural man, that grace, ease, and spirituality which are indispensable, and the prerogatives of the new man, justice, proportion, rectitude, consistency, and authority. Happy, divine temperament! which is given only those who from the bottom of their heart can say to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!"

Hence, brethren, let us not doubt that when Jesus Christ gave the name of Peter to him who had not yet said to him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," it was because he saw in him the germ of that faith, or had resolved to give it to him. But in order that there might be no mistake, he renewed this same act in new circumstances; he, a second time, says to Simon, "Thou art Peter," when Simon had publicly said to him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." What had at first been a gratuitous gift, a sovereign concession, took in some sort the character of a recompense or an exchange; "Blessed art thou, said Jesus to Simon, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee,

but my Father which is in heaven ; and *I in my turn say unto thee*, thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." No more ambiguity, no more possibility of mistake. These words display at once the sovereign freedom of God and his sovereign reason ; his sovereign freedom, in that among all who confess the same faith as Simon, Simon alone is chosen ; his sovereign reason, in that he gives the leadership of the Church to a man in whom the faith of the Church and the system of Christianity are entire and living.

In fine, brethren, facts have proved that Jesus Christ did right in naming Simon ; and this leads us to our last reflection : that it pertains to God alone to name rightly, because it pertains to him only to try the hearts and the reins. This is a glory which must be left to him, a right which we must not attribute to ourselves. Doubtless, brethren, you understand me. I mean not to interdict you, under pretext of the respect due to God, from all judgment, and consequently from all decision. This were, in one word, to declare human life impossible, and give the lie to the Gospel itself, of which numerous important precepts presuppose the exercise of the right which I should have denied. To quote only a single example : how could we absolutely refuse to a man the faculty of knowing his fellow, and, up to a certain point, of judging him, when Jesus Christ himself, speaking of the teachers of religion, says to his disciples, " Ye shall know them by their fruits ?" What a person is at a given moment, what he is with regard to another person or object, and even what he is as to his character, which is not his soul, but the manifestation of his soul, we can know, or at least presume ; for in these different respects, we seldom go beyond a strong probability. But, dearly beloved brethren, to presume or even to know all this, is not to know absolutely what an individual is. What he *is* is properly and only

what he may be ; what he is is what he will become. The profound and invisible germ of his future course constitutes his personality. But who knows this germ ? When a man becomes something else than we imagined, or even the contrary, what do we say ? that we know him not ; that the event has revealed in him an element which had escaped us. For we never think of supposing that he has suddenly become essentially different from what he was. Now this happens to us very often to be a lesson to us. Since in certain cases an element, thus essential, has escaped us, we ought to think that in each individual the lowest depth is hidden from our view. Who, besides, knows to what extent circumstances modify a man's character and whole moral being ? How often, under the force of circumstances, do two individual existences essentially alike appear different, how often alike, though essentially different ! In order to appreciate them, would it not be necessary to be able to separate the person from the circumstances which surround him ? And who would presume to attempt this ? Who could flatter himself with exactly calculating the influence of circumstances ? None but God. Who, moreover, could separate a man from his opinions, which very often come to him from without, which often are no more to his soul than clothes to his body, and nevertheless seem part of himself ? Who will make this separation ? None but God. With great reason has a father of the Church declared that " each man in reality is only what he is in the eyes of God, nothing less and nothing more." Thus, then, strictly speaking, God alone can *name* ; but the name which he gives is the true name, the name which exhausts the idea, the irrevocable name, the eternal name. Let us name, however, since after all it must be done ; but let it be with reserve. Let us remember that our truest appellations are never penetrating, never complete. Let us fear, above all, to name in

the way of contempt or blame ; and since it is our destiny to be often deceived, let our errors bear the stamp of that charity which believeth all things, excuseth all things, beareth all things, hopeth all things.

Dear brethren, it was not necessary for us perfectly to name each of our fellows, but it was of infinite importance for us properly to name God ; and God has not denied us what was thus most important. He has told us his name in the gospel ; and henceforth we know that God is holy, that God is love. To know this is to know all. It is to know the true name of all things. It is to know that this world is not a chaos, but a world. It is to know that our earthly career is not without reason nor without end. It is to know that man, even in the depth of his fall, is a being whose nature God honors. It is to know the true name of prosperity, which is grace ; and of distress, which is trial. It is to know that life is not what we call by this name ; but that our true life is hid with Christ in the bosom of God. It is, in fine, to know *our* true name ; we are the children of pardon, after having been the children of wrath. All this good, new, and sublime nomenclature has been proclaimed from the height of the cross, and transcribed in the Gospel, where the most ignorant among us can spell it with the most learned. In naming himself, God has named all. O divine nomenclator, divine instructor of human nature, lead all men to thy school ! Fill all hearts with a keen, insatiable, holy curiosity ! Teach some seriously to inquire by what name thou art pleased to be called ! Turn others aside from seeking thy name only in the laws of their mind, in those of the world and of society, in the wants of human nature, instead of seeking it in that utterance of the cross in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Let the adorable name with which thou wast named in the humble inn of Bethlehem, in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the rock of

Golgotha ; let this majestic and consoling name become thy name for ever in our conscience and our heart. Let our life, O God, name thee as thou art named ! Let our life correspond to the name at once glorious and mild, with which thou hast named thyself. Let all our endeavors be to bear it worthily upon the earth ! let all our ambition be to see it for ever confirmed to us in the eternal mansions !

## JESUS FULFILLING THE LAW.

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"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. v. 17-20.

THERE was a time when all persons seemed to honor Jesus Christ. They came flocking from all parts of Judea, and pressed around him to listen to his words. An immense multitude longing eagerly to hear him are now covering the slopes of a hill into which Jesus has gone up with his disciples. He opens his mouth ; he teaches his Apostles, and with his Apostles the whole multitude, who keep silence in order not to lose a word of his instructions.

What is this divine Redeemer going to teach them ? Redemption, think you ? the grand tidings of the forgiveness of sins ? He is probably going to give them a display of his

powers as Mediator and Saviour? Not at all. It is not the preacher of grace that they are going to hear, but the preacher of righteousness. Why does this astonish you? Why should Jesus Christ begin with any other topic? Of what use were it to speak of grace to him who thinks he needs it not? And how should the want of it be felt without a previous knowledge of all the demands and holiness of the law which has been transgressed? It is natural, then, for him who is the Holy One of God, as well as the eldest Brother of mankind, to preach righteousness before preaching grace.

But the listening multitude is composed of two sorts of persons. There are some who hate the law and all law, because a law is a curb, a boundary, and this their passions will not admit. There are others who profess a great respect for the law of Moses, who plunge themselves on being the most rigid observers of it; and to whom this affectation of obedience and simplicity has given much respect and authority.

Both classes are probably saying to themselves, What is this new doctor going to teach? There is already a law, a law reputed divine, a law deemed perfect, a very rigorous law. What remains for Jesus to do? Is he going to abrogate, or at least mitigate the law? "Ah!" says the former, "in that case he is welcome!" "God forbid," says the latter, "that he should abrogate this law which forms our glory, our power, and which in falling would drag us in its fall. Let him confirm it, then, or be judged a false prophet!"

Jesus, who knows the hearts of both, replies to their thoughts: "*Think not,*" he says to the former, "*that I am come to DESTROY the Law;*" and by this one word he annihilates their foolish hopes. Foolish at all events, since if this teacher speaks in his own name, he has clearly no right to destroy or alter the law; and, if he comes from God, it is impossible for him to destroy it, for this were to destroy God

himself. The law is necessary between God and the creature. The law is essential to our moral nature, our conscience telling us all that we have duties, and are made to obey. The law is eternal as our relations with God, and as God himself. The law is truth in the department of morals. Now, can truth be abolished? Can a time arrive, can circumstances occur, can a dispensation be foreseen in which truth will cease to be truth, man be no longer man, God no longer God? Then only would the law be no longer law. It may be fulfilled with more or less facility in circumstances more or less favorable; it may receive this or that form, this or that expression; but abolished or altered it can never be. Accordingly Jesus says to the former, "I am not come to destroy the law." To the latter he says, "*I am come to FULFIL it.*" This one word disquiets them. What need is there of *fulfilling* this law? Is it not perfect? What remains but religiously to maintain it?

For a moment Jesus Christ appears to enter into their view. "*Till heaven and earth pass,*" says he, "*one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law till all be fulfilled.*" But he goes on to explain. This fulfilment is not as they understand it. The object is to pass from the letter which kills to the spirit which gives life, from an external and material obedience to an internal and spiritual obedience, from the work of the hands to that of the heart, from the offering of goods to that of ourselves, from the sacrifice of goats and heifers to that of the Priest. The thing required is not a new law, but a new spirit, not new observances, but a second birth. The ancient law said, *Do*. The new law says, *Be*.

This suits not the views either of the former, to whom the ancient law was too burdensome, or of the latter, who feel that to them the new yoke would be ten times heavier than the old. For to give our goods one time, the movements of our body, the work of our hands, and even the attention of



our mind, is a thing which may be done, and when it is done, we are quits; but to give the heart, to change the nature, to become a new man, who can do it? This, moreover, removes all limits to obedience. For the law which Jesus proclaims to-day is in its nature infinite. It never says, *Enough*. What this new law demands is not the submission of our own will, but its annihilation; not an equitable division with God; but resignation in his hands of all that we have, and all that we are. Here the Pharisees seem to say: Better treble the number of our duties, our offerings, our holidays, better multiply and increase all observances, and hold us quit of this new law. On these conditions, apparently so harsh, we are sure of being still gainers.

The righteousness which our Saviour preaches is not only alarming to the weakness of the Pharisees, it is mortifying to their pride. They are told that a righteousness like theirs gives no access to the kingdom of heaven. They, pre-eminently the holy and just, are thus excluded. All panting, exhausted, and covered with sweat, they had climbed the steepes of the law; they thought to have reached the summit; they had got thus far, worn with fatigue, and felt paid for their pains by looking down disdainfully on the valley where so many others have remained. Now they are told that they were mistaken, that they have not arrived, that this summit is not even table land, that this way is not the way, that in the view of the spiritual law they are no farther advanced than those in the plain. What mortification! what disappointment! Ah! doubtless all their pains would not have been lost if, instead of wishing to amass a treasure of self-righteousness and vainglory, they had wished to testify to God by their conduct that their heart was his, that their heart at least sighed after him. But their acts were only a form, a semblance of obedience, a defiance, so to speak, thrown from below to the holiness of the Most High. Having in fact sown *nothing*, they cannot reap.

Let us not omit to observe that the pride of the Pharisees is even greater than it seems at first. For even although Jesus had not added any thing, substituted any thing, to the obligation of the ancient law, the Pharisees could not, without presumption, flatter themselves with having fulfilled it. It is impossible to admit that they had observed it without intermission, and in every point. They had certainly allowed more than one iota or tittle to fall to the ground. Be this as it may, they are condemned and fallen in the view of the spiritual law. All these observances, all these rites, so carefully performed, were only symbols, shadows, and they took the shadow for the body. There was in the law of Moses a spiritual law, a law of internal obedience, a law of love, which they might have discerned had they been willing ; and, in fact, many among the Jews had discerned it. It is of this *spiritual law*, not of the *other*, that Jesus tells us in my text that not one jot or tittle will be lost. It is this spiritual law which ought to have been observed in love. It is this spiritual law that will condemn them. For if they ought, as many had already done, to have *discerned the body of Christ* in the Old Testament, how much more, if they had been sincere, would they have then discerned the idea and spirit of Christ !

Thus, by two words, Jesus has confounded the hope of the class who desire the abolition of the law, and the pride of the other class who wish to maintain it. Not only is he not come to destroy, he is come to *fulfil* it. Grand expression ! Could it be used in vain ?

Certainly not, for in all possible senses Jesus has fulfilled the law.

To fulfil a law is to carry it to perfection ; to fulfil a law is to satisfy it. These two ideas are united in the view of our Lord. In these two respects, then, he has fulfilled the law ; for this very thing he *came*.

For this it was necessary that some one should come, because the law was not fulfilled, and no man on the earth was capable of fulfilling it. Had not Jesus with this view descended from the height of his glory, what Moses, what John Baptist, what prophet could have been able to say to God, "*In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come?*"

Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, Jesus Christ, perfect in truth, in holiness, and love, came to fulfil the law, and has in fact fulfilled it.

He fulfilled it in his instructions, in which he sums it up (that is, gathers together its leading features), and explains it (that is, acquaints us with its spirit, its innermost meaning, its whole bearing, extent, and force); in this respect the Gospel is a second edition, perfected by a master-hand, that is, a Divine hand, a second edition of the writings of the Old Testament. It is, if we prefer it, a Divine translation. I have already said that the spiritual law already existed in the Old Testament, but it could be discerned only by spiritual Jews, and its true meaning escaped all others. It was a kind of similitude or parable, the key of which was given by the Spirit to the well inclined. Jesus Christ has translated it into a language intelligible to all. The law henceforth is spiritual for all, even for them who are not spiritual. All are constrained to admit that it is the heart which is asked, and that so long as they have not given the heart they have given nothing.

Jesus Christ, moreover, *fulfilled* the law in his life; a translation, if possible, still more perfect than the other. Jesus Christ, by the spotless purity of his character, by his entire devotedness to the Divine will, by the incomparable perfection of his obedience, and the superabundant fulness of his love, is the *law personified*. He who beholds Jesus Christ beholds the law. He who lives with Jesus Christ lives in the

law, is one with the law. Now, once for all, we know that the perfect law is a human law, since he who perfectly fulfilled it was perfectly man, and that in him it was *man* who fulfilled the law.

But in every law are two things: the injunction (or the precept), the sanction (or the penalty). A law without a sanction, or to the violation of which no punishment is annexed, is not a law. Now here is the wonder. In this last point of view, no one has fulfilled the law or satisfied the law on this earth, save He who had perfectly fulfilled it under the former point of view, in other words, by his obedience. In fact, no creature here below can say, or dare say, that by his sufferings he has satisfied the law. Every one would fain persuade himself he does, and find in the evil which he suffers the expiation of the evil he has done. No one succeeds. Conscience, rebellious and deaf to all the suggestions of our carnal sense, persists, in spite of all our sufferings, to declare that she is not satisfied, and the sinner who has suffered most is not one hair-breadth nearer peace than the most fortunate sinner. Let us, therefore, say boldly, with the concurrence of all consciences, that the law does not find its satisfaction or fulfilment in our sufferings. But it has found it in the incarnation of the Son of God. I say the *incarnation*, for assuredly the incarnation, the degradation of the Divinity to human nature, the coming of the Holy One in a flesh of sin, is the most complete, the most absolute, and at the same time the most impenetrable and mysterious of *sacrifices*, in whatever sense we choose to take the term. Jesus Christ sacrificed himself by assuming flesh, and his agony in Gethsemane, his death in Golgotha, are only the crowning of his passion, and the final goal of his death. His passion and his death commenced with his life. And here it is proper to observe, that in this way the law of rites or symbols instituted under the Old Testament is fulfilled and thereby abrogated.

But it is not enough that the law be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, it is necessary that it be by him fulfilled in us. In this essential point, as in all others, Christ Jesus was true to his word. And how? By depositing in the hearts of those who believe in him the true spirit of the law, and the true principle of obedience.

The true *spirit of the law* is love. Love, says the Gospel, *is the end of the commandment, the fulfilling of the law, the bond of perfectness.* The true *principle of obedience* is liberty. Only liberty is capable of obeying. He who is not free cannot give to the law a true obedience. He yields, he bends, but he obeys not. It was to enable us to obey that we were made free. But before Jesus Christ, we were not so; and out of Jesus Christ we cannot have either the true principle or the true condition of obedience, namely, liberty.

How could love, a generous and joyful love of God, blossom in hearts contracted and frozen by a feeling of guilt, in those who, having passed their days in offending God, could neither see him nor figure him under aspects which could excite love? And, without going further, how could they be supposed to love a God whom they knew not; whose nature, whose very existence, was brought into question; and for which mankind had in their despair substituted gods of their own invention, dumb idols, sometimes even demons?

God gave a law; but for those whose look did not penetrate within the veil this law demanded obedience, absolute obedience; and the principle or condition of true obedience, liberty, existed not; and that for this reason, and this alone, that the love commanded by it existed not. The liberty which was wanting was the liberty of love. Men obeyed with the hands, not with the heart. To obey thus is not to obey. Human laws may be contented with such an obedience. God is not contented with it; and man himself would not be contented with it in regard to God. Man, in

his relations with God, so long as he loves not, will not feel himself free, nor be free. Fear, in banishing love, banishes freedom. Now, it is certain (for who would deny it?) that the *fear of death* (and of what is to follow it) held us, according to the expression of an apostle, *all our lifetime subject to bondage*. Heb. ii. 15.

*Restore me the joy of thy salvation*, exclaims David, *and uphold me with thy free Spirit!* This cry of the prophesying is the cry of humanity; and Jesus, in the days of his flesh, responded to this cry. He proclaimed the pardon of God. He taught us that God loves the children of men, and loves them as a God can love. He declared that the love of God transcends all his works, and that God is LOVE. Every one, if he looks to Christ, may believe himself loved of God; since he is so in fact, and with a love without measure, as is every thing which is in God. It is not of his pardon merely that he is assured, but of the love of God, a love full of solicitude and tender care; so that one would say that as God is the true treasure of his soul, his soul is the treasure of God. He has in heaven a father. What do I say, a father? a mother; and this is still too feeble, since God himself by his prophet defies the love of the fondest mother to be ever equal to his own. If the disciple has hitherto respected the law, if he has endeavored to observe it, if he has consequently felt all its weight, it is impossible that his heart should not open to joy, open to love, and consequently to freedom. For him all is changed in life and in death, in time and eternity. In his eyes all becomes consolation, blessing, hope. He knows that he is loved, and that it is God who loves him. Every thing is here; hither all felicities repair, here all sorrows are ingulfed. Love is born here, and sits here free; love raises him to true liberty, raises him to true obedience. Till this day he had with his sweat moistened the furrow of the law. He had borne the

yoke of God as the ox bears that of the ploughman. He had *bent* under a stronger necessity ; he had not yet *obeyed*. This day only he begins to obey.

He is no longer under the law ; yet he is, and is more than ever, under the law. He is no longer under the external law ; he is more than ever under the internal law. This law he reveres. He rejoices to bear its yoke ; he loves it as he loves grace. The Gospel is in his eye law and grace combined. In the law and in grace united, he sees the complete expression of the will of God, the complete manifestation of his glory. He does not separate the one from the other, he does not prefer the one to the other, for in each he finds the other, grace in the law and the law in grace, and in each he sees God entire. For him the law is not merely *perfect* ; it is *delightful* ; he finds it *sweeter than honey and the honey-comb*. Be assured of this : at the end, if not at the beginning, the law must appear delightful as grace.

This fulfilment of the law in the disciple of the Saviour is still fulfilled, if we may so speak, by his continual supplies. We need them. For the law will seem to us perfect long before it seems to us agreeable, and perhaps it will never seem to us agreeable so long as it seems perfect. But we have not a dead Christ. We have a living, a continually acting Christ, whose *delights*, to use the words of Solomon, *are with the sons of men*. Although *his yoke is indeed easy, and his burden light, and his commandments are not grievous* to those whom *faith* in his name has given the victory over the world, he still comes, comes every day to their aid by his Spirit. He bears their crosses along with them. He strengthens them by an invisible food, and consoles them by words which no tongue can translate. But let us leave it to themselves to narrate their holy experience. We should speak of it too imperfectly. We have allowed ourselves to go the length of indicating these wonders, but it is for others,

for those nearer the source, for those who have drunk more deeply, to speak to us of the sparkling purity and freshness of those wells of salvation which spring up unto life eternal.

THE END.





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